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*Rev. J. Higley
with the Respect of
Audience*

A

HISTORY

OF THE

FIRST CHURCH AND PARISH IN DEDHAM,

IN THREE DISCOURSES,

DELIVERED ON OCCASION OF THE COMPLETION,

NOVEMBER 18, 1838,

OF THE SECOND CENTURY

SINCE THE GATHERING OF SAID CHURCH.

BY ALVAN LAMSON, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN DEDHAM.

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1867

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At a meeting, at which a large portion of the male members of the first Congregational Church and Society in Dedham were present, immediately after Divine Service, December 2d, 1838, the subscribers were chosen a committee to wait on the Rev. Dr. Lamson, and thank him for his able and eloquent Sermons this day completed, and request a copy for the press.

JEREMY STIMSON,
EBENEZER FISHER, Jr.
ENOS FOORD,
SAMUEL C. MANN,
JOSEPH GUILD.

ERRATA.—On p. 80, line 18, *for same, read next.*
“ “ 88, “ 8, *for south, read east.*
“ “ 95, “ 2, *for 1662, read 1762.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

The first of these Discourses was delivered on the day of the Annual Thanksgiving, Nov. 29, 1838, and the other two on the Sunday following. The Church was gathered the 8th of Nov. 1638. This, allowing for difference of style (the rule requiring ten days to be added to a date occurring in the seventeenth century, and eleven days to one occurring in the eighteenth, in order to convert Old Style into New,) gives the 18th of Nov. as the two hundredth anniversary of that event. The state of the writer's health did not admit of its commemoration by this Church at that time. The difference, however, is only of a few days. Mr. Dexter's Centennial was not delivered till fifteen days after the time. In my own case I should have selected the exact day, it falling this year on Sunday, but that being out of the question for the reason just stated, the best I could do was to make my Discourses the first offering to my people, on resuming my labors among them after some months absence.

In regard to my facts I have spared no labor to secure the greatest accuracy. My authorities, when I have not named them, have been, for the most part, the Proprietor's and Town Records, and those of the Church and Parish. I have not thought it necessary to encumber my pages with minute references to these Records, more especially as the date of the transaction will, in general, be a sufficient guide to any who may be disposed to consult the originals.



SERMON 1.

PSALM lxxviii. 2.

I WILL UTTER DARK SAVINGS OF OLD.

On the day of the Annual Thanksgiving, one hundred years ago, on the spot I now occupy, and from the text, a part of which I have just read, a Discourse commemorative of the Fathers was delivered by the Rev. Samuel Dexter, to an audience which has since vanished. I address their descendants, some of them of the third and fourth generation. My own children are descendants in the fourth generation of him who then stood where I now stand. Since that time many vicissitudes have been witnessed. Not only are the same individuals not found, but the works of their hands are many of them gone. The appearance of surrounding objects bears testimony that they are recent. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. Modes of thought, feelings, habits are not the same. All the arrangements of social life have undergone an essential modification. Time and events have moved on, uttering their grave admonitions, teaching the mutability of earthly things, and the nothingness of this fleeting life.

This Church now numbers two hundred years. The close of the second century of its existence claims some notice. It is a season, I trust, by which we may profit. From the mouldering relics and obscure traditions of other times, something may be learned, which will not merely gratify a liberal curiosity, but may be made subservient to a moral and religious use.

In performing the duty the occasion imposes on me, it is not my intention to pronounce a panegyric on the founders of the church or town. The task I have prescribed to myself is a more sober one. I am not about to eulogize the dead, but simply to recount a few of their acts, and those only of a religious character. The second centennial anniversary of the incorporation of the town has been commemorated in a discourse by another hand, and in a manner worthy the occasion and the theme,* and I shall not attempt to cull fruit from the same field. A different province is assigned to me. I am to give a sketch, as full as the materials within my reach admit, of the ecclesiastical history of the town and parish. The affairs of the church, and not matters of civil polity are to be my subject.

In the minds of the New England Fathers these were intimately united. They emigrated chiefly from religious motives, and that they might, to use their own phrase, ‘carry forward the reformation.’ Religion was ever uppermost in their thoughts. But they saw clearly that religious freedom could not subsist without civil liberty. Accordingly, and in conformity with the natural order of things, the little communities which started up in this Western wilderness began by laying the foundation of an orderly civil government, partaking largely of the principles of liberty. This was with them a religious act; but this done, some more positive provision was to be made for the support of public worship and the enjoyment of christian institutions and ordinances. And this was made their next care.

So it was here. The original settlers in this place shared the spirit which animated the first adventurers to these New England shores. They were men of worth, distinguished alike for enterprise, intelligence, and love of liberty; above all, they were religious men, as the original instrument called the Town Covenant, clearly proves. This is a document of great interest in other respects. It shows that the original proprietors possessed a forecast and wisdom which fitted them for their work. It embodies those principles, obedience to which constituted the governing policy of the infant settlement, which stamped on

* Centennial Address, by Samuel F. Haven, Esq. delivered Sept. 21, 1836.

it the character it subsequently exhibited, and which it has not yet wholly lost.

But especially it shows a deep sense of accountableness to God, and a profound reverence for religion. Nor, in this latter respect, did it remain a dead letter. No sooner had the little band provided themselves shelter against the inclemencies of the weather, by such hasty structures as they were able to rear, and by the first rude fabric of a government taken security for the maintenance of social order, than true to their principles, they set about erecting a house for God's worship, not anticipating success to their enterprise till this was accomplished. This was in 1637, when the tide of persecution for religious liberty ran highest in their native land, and multitudes in consequence, were transporting themselves hither, notwithstanding the strict orders in Council prohibiting their embarkation.

Several of these, either pleased with the company, or attracted by the beauty and fertility of the spot, came to Dedham. Among them was Mr. John Allin, who afterwards became pastor of the church. On the 18th July, 1637, having applied for admission here, he was accepted, and along with him, the requisite certificates from the magistrates being presented, Ferdinando Adams, Michael Metcalf, Anthony Fisher, Thomas Wight, Eleazer Lusher, Robert Hinsdale, John Luson, John Fisher, Thomas Fisher, Mr. Timothy Dalton, and John Morse.

The company now consisted of about thirty families. They had hitherto met for religious worship under one of the large trees which then shaded the plain. Tradition differs somewhat as to the precise place where it stood. Probably they assembled on different spots, and thus the varying accounts, one of which asserts the tree to have stood a little west of the site afterwards occupied by the meeting house, and the other, on the east side of Dwight's brook, near the angle formed by the old Boston road, and that now leading to Mill Village, may be reconciled.

As early as the first of February 1638, a committee was chosen, as it is expressed in the Records, "to contrive the frame of a meeting house, to be in length thirty-six feet, and twenty feet in breadth, and between the upper and the nether sill in the

sides to be twelve feet," to be erected partly by joint labor of the inhabitants, and partly by rate.

This vote, the company, notwithstanding the impediments of the season, immediately proceed to execute. The materials were to be brought from Wigwam Plain, or the way leading to it, but these proving inaccessible on account of the snow, those living near the centre were encouraged to make a loan of timber, the town pledging itself to replace it when wanted. Thus the work went on, and the frame was ready to be set up. For this purpose a spot had been reserved, somewhat west, as I infer, of that afterwards selected, since the reason assigned for the change was the "loving satisfaction unto some neighbors on the East side of Little River," afterwards called Dwight's Brook. To this end a part of the lot of Joseph Kingsbury is purchased, bounded as described in the old books, north by High Street, as that which now sometimes goes under the name of Common Street, was originally called, (a name which I think should be restored from respect to the memory of the founders of the town, and convenience of reference to the ancient Records) and east by the way leading from the "Key," or landing, to Wigwam Pond, being the place which has been ever since retained, and on which we are now assembled. The spot being fixed upon, those who lived at a distance, were to be accommodated with building lots near the meeting house. Among these Mr. John Allin is expressly named, and immediately provided for. Thus all went on harmoniously, the frame was erected, and a covering of thatch was procured by persons delegated by the town to "mowe, gather up, and bring it home," with such assistance "at the town charge" as might be needed.

Though the building was now soon in a state to be occupied, it was not completed till some years after. Under date, 11th March, 1646, I find a vote of the town ordering that it shall be "forthwith completely finished," the reason assigned being, that "it being yet unfinished was not a supply to the congregation." Some years after this, (4th eleventh month, 1657) the town "declare that they will have the meeting house lathed upon the studs, and so daubed and whitened over workman like." The next year notice occurs of a "new gallery lately set up," to

meet the wants of the growing community. This was twenty years after the house was erected. Still, when we reflect that it covered less ground than our present Vestry, and that the town now, 1653, numbered 166 families, nearly all of which, as we have a right to infer from the religious habits of the day, were fully represented at public worship, we are somewhat at a loss to imagine how the whole congregation could have been accommodated.

Hitherto I have been describing the proceedings in the town, the building of the meeting house being a joint concern of the Proprietors. While its humble walls were rising however, steps were taken for the organization of a church. This was a matter not to be lightly accomplished by our Fathers; and as their mode of proceeding is minutely detailed in our ancient records, and the subject possesses not merely a local, but a general historical interest, I shall be pardoned, I trust, if in the account I am about to give, I go a little more into detail than might, under other circumstances, be admissible.

When the Massachusetts colonists emigrated, they had adopted no settled form of church government. Though driven from the church of England by their inability conscientiously to conform to certain prescribed ceremonies and oaths,* they scarcely yet acknowledged themselves as Separatists. But having crossed the ocean and planted themselves in the wilderness, where the arm of the bishops could not reach them, they were determined, in the uncontrolled exercise of the right of private judgment, to go back to first principles, and devise for themselves such a form of ecclesiastical discipline and government, as appeared most agreeable to reason and scripture, and most nearly approached the simplicity of the primitive standard.

So it was with the founders of this church. They were completely masters of themselves: they had left behind them all human authority, when they fled to these wilds, and they were now entirely at liberty to carry out their notions of reform to any extent they chose. Of this advantage they were fully sensible, and they were determined to use it. Hence, with the Bible in

* See Note A, at the end.

their hands, they proceeded coolly to consult their own reason. As they prized liberty themselves, however, they did not wish to deprive others of it by insisting that they should adopt implicitly their conclusions, or conform to their standard. This they are very careful to say in the Preface to their Records, and it is an honorable trait in their character, and too important to be omitted. These Records purport to contain a "brief history of the church of Christ gathered in his name at Dedham, in New England, the 8th of the 9th month, relating only such passages of Providence and carriages of affairs thereof, as were thought most material and useful, both for the present state of the church to review upon any occasion, and also for future ages to make use of in any case which may occur wherein light may be fetched from any examples of things passed, no way intending," it is added, "hereby to bind the conscience of any to walk by this pattern, or to approve of the practice of this church further than it may appear to be according to the rule of the gospel." This is in the true spirit of liberality.

The Record then proceeds to state, that the Inhabitants of the Town, being at this time, 1637, about thirty families, few of them known to each other, having come together from different parts of England, it was "thought meet," that "such as affected church communion," and others who might choose to come, should assemble at each others' houses, every fifth day, in order to become better acquainted with the "spiritual temper and gifts" of each other, and "lovingly to discourse and consult together" upon questions of civil order, and the right constitution of a church.

It is a subject of regret that the transactions of these meetings relating to temporal matters, or as it is rather quaintly, but forcibly expressed, to the "just, peaceable, and comfortable proceeding in civil society in the town" are not entered on the record. Those which which pertain to religion are related with a good degree of minuteness. The questions discussed, with the results, are given, and furnish a curious illustration of the habits of thinking and tastes of the day. I will give one or two of them as a specimen.

"1st Question. Whether such as in the judgment of charity,

look upon one another as christians, may gather together, speak, and hear the word, pray, and fast, or confer together, being out of church order, as we are, and many unknown to each other."

Qu. 2. Concerning the duties of christian love, how far we stand bound thereto in our condition."

Other questions follow, relating to the "matter of a church;" the mode of gathering it; its rights and powers; the ordinances committed to it; its officers; "the discerning and receiving members into it," and kindred topics. These questions were discussed with becoming gravity, in a kind and liberal spirit, and with much practical good sense united with a due degree of theological astuteness.

In this way the winter passed. When the spring opened, several of the settlers being members of the Watertown church, the Pastor of that church was desired to dismiss a portion of them, together with Mr. Thomas Carter, who had "exercised some good time there, and knew the people," says Mr. Allin, "better than I," that so the foundation might be laid of a "christian society among us." This request was not complied with,—the Pastor of Watertown objecting to "dismiss any but into a settled church." It was not, as I infer, till more than three years after, that the members in question received their dismissal, for under date of July 1641, I find a record stating that divers brethren and sisters of the Watertown church residing among us "were received, Mr. Phillips, their Pastor, and Mr. Carter, and Mr. How, elders, testifying in their favor." Mr. Carter afterwards became minister of Woburn. What office was designed for him here, at that time, had he chosen to come, does not appear.

Denied assistance from this source, the people requested Mr. Allin, whom, says the Record, the Town had invited here with a view to "future employment in public work," to undertake, with such others as he might see fit to associate with him, the business of organizing a church. He first applies to Mr. Ralph Wheelock, and they jointly add eight more, in all ten. These, after some preliminary steps, agree to go out each in turn, while his character and qualifications for church membership should be scanned by the rest, they severally promising peacea-

bly to submit to the judgment of the company, to be "taken or left" as might seem fit. The result was, that Mr. John Allin, R. Wheelock, John Luson, John Frayry, Eleaser Lusher, and Robert Hinsdale, six of the ten, are accepted. The remaining four, Mr. Edward Alleyn, Anthony Fisher, Joseph Kingsbury, and Thomas Morse are not then received. Edward Alleyn, who was at first objected to* was afterwards admitted, as also Anthony Fisher, though the latter was subsequently rejected. Of the remaining two, one besides being thought to be "too much addicted to the world," exhibited other marks of human infirmity. Particularly, "the Lord left him," so says the record, "without any provocation thereto, to such a distempered passionate flying out upon one of the company" who had been deputed to "follow home some things close upon him," that remaining "stiffe," he was "given over." The other being thought "dark and unsatisfactory in respect to the work of grace," was also for the time, rejected, though both were some years afterwards received, as was also Anthony Fisher.

John Hunting, recently from England, was admitted towards the end of Summer, making in all eight now ready to enter into church communion. Still the work was delayed, partly from the diffidence of those engaged in it, and partly from their earnest desire to secure the services of Mr. John Phillips, a minister then recently from England, not Henry Phillips, as has been generally supposed †. In this, after some negociation, they were unsuccessful. Mr. Phillips did not come at the time, and when he did come, he staid but a single year; when he left and returned with his wife to England. Their inability to obtain him was a disappointment more deeply felt, if we may judge from the strong expressions used in the records, than the former in regard to Mr. Carter.

The company now left to its own resources, resolve to delay no longer. They had previously made known their intention to the Town and invited scrutiny. It now only remained for them,

* Among others, 'Mr. Daulton in his own name and the name of the church of Watertown, objected some grievances and offences' relating to some neglect of that church and its ordinances.

† See Note B.

according to the usage of the day, to give notice to the several churches, and to the civil magistrates. Having so far complied, however, with what was enjoined on them by the common practice of the times, they were exceedingly careful that their liberties should not thereby be enthralled. An incident is recorded in this connexion, which is worth relating, as it shows the dominant policy in occasional collision, or threatened collision with sentiments of popular liberty. Indeed the mine was repeatedly on the point of being sprung; and there was constant danger of an explosion, so long as the old strictness in regard to the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, and the connexion between church membership and the right of political suffrage, prevailed.

In making their communication to the magistrates, they had been "told by some," that the General Court had ordained that no church should be gathered without the advice of other churches. Conceiving that this might be "prejudicial to the liberty of God's people," and contained the "seeds of usurpation," says the Record, "we desired the Governor to inform us of that law, and the true intent thereof; which he professed was only this, that the Court, or law enacted, did no way intend to abridge such a liberty of gathering into church fellowship privately, as it were unlawful, or as if such a church were not a true church rightly gathered; but that the scope was this, that if any people of unsound judgments, or erroneous way, &c, should privately set up churches amongst them, the Commonwealth would not so approve them as to communicate that freedom and other privileges unto them, which they did unto others, or protect them in their government if they saw their way dangerous to the public peace; which answer," it is added, "gave us satisfaction in that scruple," though in the "freedom and other privileges" referred to, and which would be forfeited in the circumstances described, was included the elective franchise, now generally esteemed one of the dearest rights of the citizen, and without which popular liberty would be thought to exist but in name.

Letters, a copy of which is still preserved, were then issued to the Elders and Brethren of the churches in Boston, Roxbury,

and other places, requesting their presence and counsel, the 8th day of the 9th month, corresponding to the 18th Nov. of our present style, being the time fixed upon for the solemn transaction, and expressing the hope that neither the "season of the year" nor "the rawness of the new plantation" might prevent them from coming. They arrived at the time appointed, and the ceremony proceeded. It had been previously agreed, that Mr. Wheelock should begin with prayer, and Mr. Allin should follow, first praying, then "by the way of the exercise of his gifts," should speak to the assembly, and conclude with prayer. Next came the profession of faith or doctrine, and history of personal experiences. The Elders and messengers present, and the whole people were then called upon to state any impediments to the further proceeding, if any were known to them. Mr. Mather, Teacher of the church in Dorchester, replied in the name of the rest, that they had "nothing to declare from the Lord which should move them to desist;" but added a word of "loving exhortation in respect of some passages proposed by some of the brethren." The covenant was then publicly read, to which all assented; the right hand of fellowship was then extended to each of them by the Elders, and so the transaction was finished.*

The church was thus gathered, but it being still without officers, Mr. Allin was requested for the time, to supply the place of a Teacher, and with the assistance of Mr. Wheelock, to see that its affairs were orderly conducted. During the winter following, ten additional members were admitted. The company now consisting of eighteen, it was resolved, the next spring, to proceed to fill the more important offices. All eyes were immediately turned on Mr. Allin, either for Pastor or Teacher; for there was some doubt to which office he should be appointed. After much reasoning and consultation on the subject, however, he professing that he was indifferent which office was selected, but thinking that he was better qualified for that of pastor, the rest acquiesced. At this time there appears to have been no other candidate thought of for the office. At least the church records mention no other.

* See Note C.

The next step was to select some one for ruling Elder, and for this office four persons are named, R. Wheelock, John Hunting, Mr. Thomas Carter, of Watertown, before mentioned, and John Kingsbury of the same place. It being stated, however, that the church in Watertown was about to elect Mr. Carter to the same office there, and John Kingsbury objecting to being considered a candidate, these two were dropped. The choice now lay between Hunting and Wheelock. After a good deal of deliberation, the advice of the Elders of the churches in Roxbury and Dorchester being taken, Hunting is finally selected. Wheelock quietly submits, marvelling that he was ever thought of for the office. He was the ancestor of the Founder and first President of Dartmouth College.*

Having made choice of a Pastor and ruling Elder, it was thought by the company, that the remaining offices might with safety, and perhaps with advantage to the church, be left to be filled at a future time, when better materials were at command.

The 24th of April, 1639, was selected for the ordination of those already chosen. Before this day arrived, the questions then so much agitated, relating to the nature of ordination, the right to ordain, and to whom this right belonged, were amply discussed by the members of the church. The conclusion, to which they arrived, was that ordination was but the consummation, or completion of the election, "being but a declaration of the same, and installing into office," that the same body which could elect, could also, of right ordain. This doctrine, which

* He is called by the biographers of the President, the Rev. Ralph Wheelock, and is said to have been born in Stropshire in England, in 1600, and to have been educated at Clare Hall, Cambridge. It is added, that he was an eminent nonconformist Preacher in his native country, and that after he went to Medfield, then a part of Dedham, he was in the habit of preaching occasionally there, and in the neighboring new settlements, but declined taking charge of any particular church: that he was representative of the town several years: and that he died at the age of 83. This statement is derived from modern sources apparently entitled to respect, though, I confess, I should have been better pleased, if in regard to some particulars embraced in it, the authorities had been given. See *Memoirs of President Wheelock*, by Doctors M'Clure and Parish, and a *Biographical Notice of him* by Pres. Allen, *Amer. Quart. Reg.* vol. 9.

sanctioned lay ordination, or ordination by the brethren, was the prevailing doctrine of the New England churches at that time, and it was literally adhered to in practice. So it was here. The brethren ordained; the Elders of the neighboring churches, being present and looking on, but taking no part in the ceremony, excepting at the conclusion, giving the right hand in token of approbation and fellowship. Elder Hunting was first ordained, John Allin, R. Wheelock, and Edward Alleyn being deputed by the brethren to perform the office. This they did by laying their hands on his head, Mr. Allin, at the same time offering a prayer, after which he added, "In the name of the Lord Jesus, and by his power committed to his church, we do ordain thee, John Hunting, unto the office of a ruling Elder in this church of Christ." The Elder, with the brethren before named, then proceeded to lay his hands on the head of Mr. Allin, accompanied with prayer, and "in the name of Christ and his church," so the Record proceeds "did ordain him to the office of Pastor in the church," the whole proceeding on the part of the Elder, being marked with "that gravity, comely order, without hesitation, and with such effectual and apt prayer and exhortations to the church, and to the Pastor, as gave sweet testimony to all of the presence of the Lord with him in these first fruits of his office." Mr. Whiting of Lynn, in the name of the Elders and other christians present, then gave the right hand of fellowship, and the assembly was dismissed. The next Lord's day, notice was given by the Pastor, to the church members to bring their children to receive baptism on the coming Sunday, and prepare themselves to partake of the supper on the next following. A minute account of the administration of the latter rite follows, after which the Record down to the close of Mr. Allin's ministry, about 33 years, contains little besides an account of admissions into the church and baptisms.

We may infer that the times were tranquil. The peace of the church appears not to have been disturbed by discontented or factious spirits. Indeed the turbulent passions found no aliment here. The leading men in the place took delight in sober and pacific counsels: the Plantation went on regularly advancing in population and wealth; its affairs proceeded pros-

perously, and the fruits of religion exhibited in the life, but without ostentation and uncharitableness, left few materials for the ecclesiastical chronicler.

A small number of miscellaneous facts is all I can glean during this period either from the records of the church or town. The church received no other officers than the two above named, till after the death of Mr. Allin, except the two Deacons, Henry Chickering and Nathan Aldis, who having for some time officiated, without a formal election, were on the 23d of June, 1650, regularly chosen to office, and were ordained the following Sunday, the ordination of Deacons being then customary. This was a little more than eleven years after the foundation of the church.

The same year, the celebrated Cambridge Platform, accompanied with the Westminster confession of faith, having been previously submitted to the General Court, and approved by them, arrived for confirmation. The church passed a vote of assent apparently without debate.

A few years after, in 1659, as we learn from the Proprietors Record, six copies of Mr. Norton's Book respecting the Quakers, and eight copies of the Declaration of the General Court in defence of its proceedings against them, were received for the use of the town, and distributed in the several sections of it by vote, but no further notice is taken of them, or of the subject. The settlers had other concerns to attend to, and do not appear to have mingled in any of the exciting religious controversies of the day. They were pursuing their even, quiet way, in the little retired nook they had chosen for themselves, and when not employed about their farms and gardens, the latter of which particularly attracted notice, and drew forth many encomiums for the abundance and fineness of their fruits, they were at no loss for occupation. Many affairs of economical arrangement, or of public use or accommodation, were to be looked after. The burial ground, and the way leading to it, were to be cleared, smoothed, and fenced;* and many regulations, some of

* The following record of 1638, would seem to relate to the origin of the burial place. "Nicholas Phillips and Joseph Kingsbury upon other satisfaction in land laid out from the Town unto each of them, do lay down

them of a minute character, were to be made and enforced, relating to public worship and its appendages. Looking back from our present position, we may be tempted to smile at some of these regulations, and wonder how they could have been necessary, but circumstances no doubt demanded them. If the General Court sent an order requiring the Selectmen to see that the catechising of the children was not neglected; or some persons were inconsiderate enough to tie their horses to the ladder of the meeting house, thus causing it to be displaced, or "plucked to pieces," and obstructing the passage to and from the door, these, though not matters of precisely the same importance, yet certainly presented fit subjects of attention.

The manners of the times might be illustrated by many incidents otherwise unimportant, which might be extracted from our old records. The seating of persons in the meeting house, at this period, and down to the time, when pews were erected, occasioned no little perplexity. Votes of the town are constantly occurring on the subject, sometimes referring the matter to the Selectmen, and sometimes to a committee chosen for the purpose, and sometimes to the Elders and Deacons. But the arrangement never proved satisfactory; some were constantly murmuring; and the boys being seated together, it could not but happen, that while the preacher was handling some nice point of doctrine, or dilating on some weighty text after the fashion of the day, the buoyant spirits of early life would sometimes display themselves in a manner, if not to disconcert the gravity of the more serious minded hearer, at least, not altogether consistent with the decorum belonging to the place.

I find nothing more of an ecclesiastical nature in the Records,

each of them to the Town, one parcel of the south end of their house lots, and betwixt the same and the swamp, for the use of a public burial place, for the Town forever, 6 of the 2 mo. 1638.' Yet the lot of 12 acres, originally granted to Nicholas Phillips is described as bounded on the South, in part, by the 'burying place,' though on the West, extending through to the Swamp, as it was called. Fol. 1, also Book of Grants. Ezekiel Holliman's lot, being one of the two above mentioned, conveyed by Holliman to Kingsbury, is described in the Book of Grants, (see also fol. 3) as bounded on the South by the way leading to the 'burying place.' These grants were made in 1636.

worth relating, except what refers to the origin and disposition of the church property, which will be given its proper place. Little is to be gathered from other sources, though incidental notices of the Settlement are occasionally met with in cotemporary writings. Johnson, in his *Wonder-Working Providence*, published in 1654, after alluding to the prosperity of the town, then consisting of about one hundred families,* its "pleasant streams," and abundant "garden fruits," fit to supply the markets of the neighboring metropolis, "whose coin and commodities," says he, "allure the inhabitants to make many a long walk," speaks of them in their character as a religious community, as having "continued in much love and unity from their first foundation." The "close clouded woods," they had already converted into smiling fields, a pleasant object, he says, "to the lonesome travellers in their solitary journey to Canectico, (Connecticut) who, it is added, in the quaint language of the time, derived much comfort from "eyeing the habitation of God's people in their way, ready to administer refreshment to the weary.†

Materials are wanting for an extended personal history of Mr. Allin. Few incidents of his life are recorded, and those only serve to excite the wish that more were known. He was born, according to Cotton Mather, in England, in 1596, in what part of it we are not informed, nor do we find any account of his early life, or of the place of his education. Mather speaks of his progress in the "tongues and arts," and calls him a "sufficient scholar," and diligent student, and makes use of other terms of general panegyric, but does not descend to particulars. Perhaps he had not the means, or he might have been willing to gratify his taste for odd quotations, and quaint conceits at the expense of facts.

From the scanty information he chooses to impart, we learn

* I confess my inability to reconcile this statement with that of a committee of the General Court, who three years after, say that the settlement consisted of 166 families. Of the two authorities, if I select between them, I prefer the latter.

† 2 Hist. Coll. VII. 9, 10. See also Josselyn's account of *Two Voyages to New England*, 3 Hist. Coll. III. 320.

that Mr. Allin was a preacher before he quitted England. His name appears in Mather's first class, embracing those who were in the "actual exercise of their ministry when they left," and Neal, speaks of him as one of those who were "already in orders in the Church of England, but being disturbed by the ecclesiastical courts for the cause of nonconformity, "transplanted themselves to New England."* He went on board the ship which was to convey him hither in disguise, to elude pursuit, but having "passed Land's-End," as is related, he with a fellow passenger, John Fisk, afterwards settled at Chelmsford, who had fled under similar circumstances, "entertained the company with two Sermons every day, besides other agreeable devotions," thus giving occasion for the remark of one of the passengers, who on being called to account for diverting himself with hook and line on the Lord's day, very innocently, or very archly, remarked that he "did not know when the Lord's day was; he thought every day was a Sabbath day, for they did nothing but pray and preach all the week long."† He arrived in 1637, and the same summer, became an inhabitant of Dedham, though not admitted a freeman of the Colony till December of the next year. His influence in the civil affairs of the town must have been decidedly felt, and he was as we have seen, the principal agent in the religious organization. For this employment no man could have been better fitted by education, temper, and habits. He became Pastor of the church, April 29, 1639, and in discharge of the duties of his office was faithful and assiduous.

He was from disposition averse to controversy, but his singular candor and amenity of temper, no less than his ingenuity and learning, caused him to be solicited to take part in discussions of an exciting nature, and deeply affecting the public mind. When it became necessary in 1646, to defend the rights of the Colonists against the attempt to bring them into subjection to the British Parliament, the Magistrates having first delivered their opinion, the Elders were requested to declare their sentiments,

* Hist. New England, vol. I, p. 195. For a conjecture in regard to the place of Mr. Allin's residence in England, see Note D.

† Mather's Magnalia, vol. 1, p. 431.

and Mr. Allin of Dedham was selected as their organ for this purpose. The next day he presented the opinions of the Elders in writing. The paper was worthy the time and the occasion. It was firm and decided, explaining the nature and limitations of Colonial allegiance in opposition to the claims and usurpations of the Commissioners for the Plantations, and giving full support to the magistrates, who were determined on resistance.*

About this time, too, questions of an ecclesiastical character were perpetually starting up, some of which were new, and occasioned no little agitation of the public mind, in this and the mother country. In the exercise of their newly acquired liberty, the emigrants had departed widely from usages, a reverence for which though greatly impaired at home, was yet far from having been extinguished. Some of their brethren in England became alarmed at the extent, to which they pushed their principles, and letters of inquiry, and occasionally of entreaty and remonstrance, were received, and controversies ensued, and many books and pamphlets were written. The Synod of Cambridge, to which the churches owed their Platform, had not yet been called, nor had there been any authoritative exposition of the discipline of the New England churches, as indeed there was not entire uniformity in practice.

It was while the religious affairs of the Colony were in this condition, that Mr. Allin was first called to take the field as a controversial writer. In 1637,† a number of Divines in England transmitted a Letter to their brethren on this side the water, requesting their views in relation to certain points of Ecclesiastical Discipline and Order, on which they had been represented as having embraced opinions at variance with those professed by them before their embarkation, and still holden by the most eminent nonconformist Divines of England. The points enumerated are nine, called the "Nine Positions." To this communication the New England Divines return an answer in 1638, and this not reaching its destination they send another the

* Winthrop II. 280, 282.

† The date is so given in the title page, though in the defence by Allin and Shepard, the Nine Questions, or Positions are said to have been sent over in 1636.

next year. The Answer contains a statement of their views concerning the Nine Positions, accompanied by a Letter in which they acknowledge, that though not guilty of all the extravagancies imputed to them, their sentiments had, in some respects, undergone a change since they had left their native shore, to breath the free air of the wilderness. For this change they think that they saw good reason; they were seekers after truth, and churches, they said, "had still need to grow from defects to purity, and from reformation to reformation age after age." This answer called forth a Reply by John Ball in behalf of the Divines of Old England, a manuscript copy of which was sent to the Elders of the New England Churches, but was never received. It was, however, printed in 1643, together with the above mentioned correspondence and Answer to the Nine Positions, which it was intended to rebut, and the next year, 1644, a copy arrived in this country.* This Reply was thought to deserve notice, and John Allin of Dedham with the assistance of the Rev. Thomas Shepard of Cambridge, was employed to prepare a rejoinder. This bears date, Nov. 28, 1645, and was printed in London in 1648, under the title of a "Defence of the Nine Questions or Positions." The manner in which the work was executed, was considered as creditable to the ability of the authors. Their names long carried weight with them. In a Tract published with the approbation of several eminent ministers, in 1693, the book is referred to as an authority,

* A copy of this Book, now rare and valuable, belongs to the Library of Harvard University. The following is its title: 'A letter of many Ministers in Old England, requesting the Judgment of their Reverend Brethren in New England concerning Nine Positions. Written Anno Dom. 1637. Together with their Answer thereto returned, Anno 1639. And the Reply made unto said Answer, and sent over unto them, Anno Dom. 1640. Now Published (by occasion mentioned in the Epistle to the Reader, following the next page) upon the desire of many godly and faithful Ministers in and about the city of London, who love and seek the truth. By Simeon Ash and William Rathband. London, Printed for Thomas Underhill, at the sign of the Bible in great Wood street, 1643.

The Answer is also found in a collection of Tracts on "Church Government and Church Covenant," &c. published in London the same year, with a Preface by Hugh Peter, also in Harvard Coll. Library.

containing the judgment of two old Divines, both of them, it is added, "famous in New England." It was many years in esteem on questions of Order and Discipline, though now valuable only to the historian and antiquary.*

The Synod of Cambridge, originating in causes similar to those which had called forth the controversy just referred to, and which gave birth to the well known Platform, met soon after, and at an adjourned term, 1648, Mr. Allin preached, from the 15th chapter of Acts, containing a history of the Council of Jerusalem. Governor Winthrop bestows a warm eulogium on the discourse, and says that the author handled his subject both as regards its "doctrines and applications," in a "godly and learned" manner, with a "clear discovery and refutation of such errors, objections, and scruples, as had been raised by some young heads in the country." While he was preaching an incident, as related by Winthrop, occurred, which, though for a moment it caused a slight tremor, on the part of a portion of his auditors, was soon converted into matter of joy and triumph. "It fell out," says the narrator, "about the midst of his sermon, there came a snake into the seats, where many of the elders sat behind the preacher." Several of them shifted their position, to avoid the intruder; but one, an Elder from Braintree, "a man," adds the journalist, "of much faith," trod upon its head, and so held it fast with his foot and staff, until it was killed. As the fancies of men were then fruitful in detecting occult meanings and emblematic significations in the events of every day life, and especially in whatever savored of the marvellous and strange, it is not surprising that so singular an occurrence should not have been allowed to pass without comment and inference. "It is out of doubt," says Mr. Winthrop, "the Lord discovered somewhat of his mind in it." "The serpent is the devil; the synod the representative of the churches of Christ in New England, the destruction and dissolution of which he has in time past, and now recently been plotting, but he is now foiled; their faith in the seed of the woman overcame him, and crushed his head." The synod then "went on comfortably," as we are told, and soon finished its business.†

* See Note E.

† Winthrop's Journal II. p. 330.

The public mind, however, was not long after agitated by other questions. One of these related to the proper subjects of baptism, and the relation in which the children of members in full communion stood to the church. This was in some respects a political question, as the circumstance of church membership then involved the most important civil rights. It appears, however, to have been discussed chiefly as a question of ecclesiastical order. Both the parties, the stricter, and the more liberal, enlisted men of name and influence in the colony. The one, the more strict, contended that only members of churches in full communion, were entitled to have their children baptised. The other was in favor of allowing greater latitude on the subject. The Synod of 1662 took the more liberal ground. Its decisions were attacked by President Chauncy, of Harvard University, and by Mr. John Davenport of New Haven. To the work of the former, called the *Antisynodalia*, Mr. Allin replied; to that of the latter, Mr. Richard Mather of Dorchester. Mr. Allin, as champion for the council, of course, advocated the less rigorous views. He urged various arguments from reason and scripture, in support of the decision of the Synod. He maintained that the doctrine of the Synod was the old doctrine, and not any notion recently broached; that it was holden by the great lights of the church, by Calvin, Cartwright, Perkins, Ames, and "hundreds more;" that it was the doctrine generally of the framers of the Cambridge Platform, but from respect to some few, who disliked it, it was not inserted.* One expression he uses, which is too characteristic of his enlarged and philanthropic spirit, to be omitted. When his antagonist, Chauncy, objected, that according to the views of the Synod, "God's covenant would be entailed to a thousand generations," Allin replies, "what hurt in that? Blessed be his name for it."

* Cotton Mather says, that the propositions asserted by the Synod of 1662, would have been inserted in the Cambridge Platform but for the "fierce opposition of one eminent person," which caused John Norton, who was desirous of their introduction, but was of a "peaceable temper," to forbear urging them any further, by which means, when adopted by another Synod, "more than twice seven years after, many people did generally count them novelties." They were certainly, he affirms, "the first principles of New England." *Magnalia* I. 265.

The controversy in which the Synod originated, however, did not soon subside. When, five years after, John Davenport of New Haven, at the age of seventy, removed to Boston, and was invited to accept the office of Pastor of the First Church, he was opposed on account of his too great strictness, and his opposition to the decisions of the Council; and the whole community was, for a time, thrown into a ferment. The result was, a secession from the first church, and the formation of a new. Ministers and people were divided in opinion. A large portion of them, however, espoused the cause of the seceders, and the whole proceeding, on the part of Mr. Davenport and his adherents, was severely censured. Seventeen ministers, in the list of whom we find several names of greatest note in the colony, and at the head of which stands that of John Allin, bore public testimony against it. The deputies finally decided in favor of the old church. At a subsequent session, a Petition, or Address, was presented by the ministers, defending themselves from the aspersions which, as they assert, had been thrown upon them, and repelling the charge of innovation and apostacy of which they, with the generality of the ministry, were accused, and solemnly professing, that they still “adhered to the safe and sober principles of the congregational way, in opposition to separation, morellian or anarchichal confusion, and licentious toleration.” Among the names of these petitioners, too, that of John Allin of Dedham stands first.* The petition in fact, but re-asserted the doctrine he had maintained in his defence of the Synod, a copy of which presented by himself to the Rev. Thomas Shepard, of Cambridge, I have had before me in preparing these notices. The Preface to the Book is dated with a little more particularity than usual, as follows: “From my study in Dedham, in N. E. 6 day, 11 month, 1663.†

* Hutchinson, vol. 1, pp. 233, 248, 251.

† The work bears the following title—“*Animadversions upon the Antisynodalia Americana, a Treatise printed in Old England, in the Name of the Dissenting Brethren in the Synod held at Boston in New England, 1662. Tending to clear the Elders and Churches of New England from those Evils and Declinings charged upon many of them in the two Prefaces before said Book. Together with an Answer unto the Reasons alleged for*

The doctrine of the Synod, with few exceptions, prevailed in the Massachusetts Colony until a comparatively recent period. This church long adhered to the liberal views of its first Pastor, though at the time I became connected with it, how long before I am not informed, they had been made to yield in practice, to the opposite and narrower principle.

The above mentioned controversial writings, which he undertook, the latter especially, with great reluctance, and only at the earnest entreaty of his friends, are, I believe, the only productions of Mr. Allin given to the public during his life, the publication of the two last Sermons he preached being posthumous. There is among the Hutchinson Papers belonging to the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, an unpublished Letter of his, addressed to the Rev. Thomas Shepard of Cambridge, on the subject of the beginning of the Sabbath, in which he contends against the propriety on the part of Christians, of observing the Jewish division of the day. The date is wanting. I have also in my possession, an original Letter of his, bearing date the 11th April, 1671, four months only before his death, and addressed to "the Rev. Mr. John Eliot, Teacher, and Mr. Samuel Danforth, Pastor of the church of Christ in Roxbury," on the subject of the divisions in the church of Braintree. It is interesting chiefly as showing that the author retained his vigor, and habits of active benevolence to the end of his days. Of the last few years of his life we know little. His labors appear to have suffered an interruption in 1668, for we hear much of a claim of Peter Woodward, in behalf of his brother William, for forty pounds, due to him, as it was contended, from the town, for preaching at that time.

Mr. Allin died on the 26th August, 1671, at the age of seventy-five, after, as Cotton Mather informs us, an "easy sickness of ten days." His "beloved wife Katherine," as he calls her in his records, died three days after, and they were both buried

the Opinions of the Dissenters. And a Reply to such Answers as are given to the Arguments of the Synod. By John Allin, Pastor of the Church of Christ at Dedham in N. England. Cambridge; Printed by S. G. & M. J. for Hezekiah Usher of Boston, 1664."

in the same grave.* She was the widow of Governor Thomas Dudley, and was married to Mr. Allin Nov. 8th, 1653, a little more than three months after the Governor's death,† Mr. Allin's first wife, Margaret, having been dead a little more than six months. The birth and baptism of three sons, by his last wife, Benjamin, Daniel, and Eliezer, are recorded in the church books.

After his death, his people in testimony of their affection, published the two last Sermons he preached, "writing their Preface," as Mather expresses it, "with tears." They defrayed the expenses of his funeral, and voted also, that a "convenient tomb, or monument, of stone and lime-mortar, and covered with meet timber, be erected over his grave, and an inscription cut thereon, with the date of his death." This vote, it would seem, was carried into effect; but it is not known that any vestige of the tomb now remains, nor does tradition mark the spot where it stood. Mr. Allin left a monument better than brass or marble, in the memory of his many excellences, and the fruit of his labors yet abiding. He possessed a vigorous, acute, and discriminating understanding, and for the age, and the circumstances in which he was placed, he wrote well. His style is marked by simplicity, directness, and force, though not by elegance. All his measures appear to have been characterised by good sense, moderation, and a plain straight forward honesty. He was prudent, firm, and energetic, entering on his work with calmness, and pursuing it with a decision and perseverance, sufficient to overcome all obstacles. He lived at a period when the affairs of the Colony required men of active habits, as well

* For the last mentioned fact I am indebted to the records of the Roxbury church, kept by Mr. Dantforth, then Pastor, where it stands alone and without comment.

† Mrs. Allin must have possessed some attractions either of mind or person, or both, for she had been once married (to Samuel Hackburne) before her marriage with the first Gov. Dudley. She was the mother of Gov. Joseph Dudley. Joseph, who was the son of his father's old age, (being born when he was 70,) passed his childhood here, "under the care," says the Boston News Letter of April 11th, 1720, in a notice of his death, 'of his excellent mother, and the Rev. Mr. Allin who married her.'

as patient thought, and he shrank from no duty which the exigencies of the times imposed. He occasionally shared the labors of Eliot in his benevolent visits among the Indians; he took a lively interest in all the great questions of the day, and in numerous ways rendered no small service to the public. To his other qualities he added uncommon amenity of disposition, modesty, and gentleness. In all the notices of him I have met with, in cotemporary or other writings entitled to respect, these traits of his character are spoken of with peculiar emphasis. There must have been something remarkable in the degree, or manner in which they manifested themselves, to account for the warm encomiums uniformly bestowed on them by those who had the best opportunity of knowing him.

Theological discussions, which too often have the effect of inflaming the passions, and infusing acrimony into the mildest natures, appear not for one moment to have disturbed the serenity of his mind. His spirits remained sunny still, and his blandness of temper never forsook him. No acerbity of feeling discloses itself in any portion of his controversial writings, but good humor, fairness, christian courtesy, and a honied sweetness* are every where visible, even when he deals the hardest

* It was one of the exercises of wit, in former days, to *anagrammatize* names, as it was called, by so transposing their letters as to form words or sentences expressive of some trait or quality of the individual. Thus, from William Noy, a laborious lawyer in the time of Charles I. was elicited, "I moyl in law." The conceit was often sufficiently far fetched. The name of John Allin was converted unto "In Honi All," as indicating his disposition. Johnson, in his *Wonder Working Providence*, speaks of him as the 'bumble, and heavenly minded, Mr. John Allin, a man of a very courteous behaviour, full of sweet Christian love towards all, and with much meekness of spirit contending earnestly for the faith and peace of Christ's Churches.' He then apostrophizes him in several lines of poetry, written in the style of the day, the last four verses of which I quote for the sake of the concluding sentiment.

‘Seven years compleat, twice told, thy work, hath bin,

To feed Christ's flock, in desert land them keep,

Both thou and they each day are kept by him :

Safe maist thou watch, being watcht by him ne'er sleeps.’

2 Hist. Coll. VII. 9.

blows against the arguments of his adversary. A rare example of moderation in that, or in any age.

Mr. Allin was, for several years, one of the largest landholders in Dedham. His estates were acquired, partly by purchase, and partly by liberal grants made to him. Of these, several were from the Town.* On the 10th May, 1643, the General Court granted him two hundred acres, at a place, called Bogestow, on Charles River, now part of Medway.

His salary, as appears from a Report of a committee appointed by the General Court, to "inquire concerning the maintenance of ministers," in 1657, was sixty pounds. His family then consisted of seven persons, and the town had in it one hundred and sixty-six families. It is added, "Mr. Allin hath a good stock of cattle, and a good accommodation in corn land and meadow."†

Of his cotemporaries and fellow laborers, some had left the stage before him, and others were soon to follow.‡ Several of them were far above the ordinary level, well endowed by nature, men of intelligence and sterling merit. A Lusher, a Fisher, and a Dwight, the second, an ancestor of Fisher Ames, and the third of the late President Dwight, are deserving, among others, of grateful remembrance, not less for the influence they exerted in the affairs of the church, than for the services they rendered the town and colony, in other respects. They cherished the interests of religion, and labored diligently to promote them.

Indeed the place was fortunate in its first inhabitants. They had a difficult task to execute, but they proved themselves fully equal to its accomplishment. They labored faithfully, and with success under all the discouragements incident to the nature of their enterprise, and their exposed situation in the midst of a hostile wilderness. They had not, as we have seen, the advan-

* See Note F.

† 3, Hist. Coll. I, 50.

‡ Dea. Henry Chickering died about one month before Mr. Allin, at the age of 82, and Lieut. Joshua Fisher and Major Eliazer Lusher, the next year. Dea. Nathan Aldis survived them four years. Timothy Dwight lived till Jan. 1717-18, when he died at the age of 87, erroneously printed 83 in a note to Mr. Dexter's Sermon. Elder John Hunting died April 12, 1689, and the office was never again filled.

tage enjoyed by the founders of several of our towns, of previous acquaintance and intimacy. They came here mostly strangers to each other. They found themselves not as we, sheltered by convenient habitations, and surrounded by all the comforts, and many of the luxuries of civilized life. Their lowly dwellings were to be reared by their own hands, and with such rude art as they possessed. The forests were to be felled, and care was to be taken for the orderly management of their civil and religious affairs, such as became the lovers of liberty, and the friends of piety and a sound morality. Their toils and cares were important, but many of them humble ones, and they could hardly have been cheered by a foresight of one half their beautiful results. Yet they were met and endured in a spirit of calm patience and hope. The very name chosen to designate the infant settlement, to whatever objections it might be liable in point of taste, at least well illustrates the temper of the little band. They who were willing to inscribe on their banner the characteristic word, *Contentment*, must have possessed dispositions and feelings which might justly excite the envy of older and more wealthy communities. They toiled at the foundation, toiled often obscurely, yet contentedly, that they might lay a firm and broad basis, on which they who should come after might securely build.

It is fit that we should hold such men in remembrance; that we should report their praises; that we should not suffer oblivion to creep over their names. It is fit that we should pause to brush away the dust which in the lapse of time is silently gathering over the record of their merits.

Their remains are insensible to our homage; their ashes slumber in yonder cemetery, and their spirits, as we trust, live with God. No tribute we can offer can affect them. But we owe it to ourselves, to a feeling of propriety and decorum, to testify our sensibility to their excellence. The sentiment which teaches us to cherish a tender respect for the memory of the dead is intimately associated with some of the most beautiful sympathies, and ingenuous feelings and affections of our nature.

We would cultivate this sentiment. To this end let us nurture in our breasts a lively regard for worth which has passed

away. Let us honor the names of those who fixed their abode beside this placid stream, to whose toils the wilderness bowed, who labored that we might enter into their labors, who smoothed the path that we might walk in it. While we thus turn aside from the business, the cares, the cold formalities of the world, to render to their virtues the tribute which is their due, we are laying our hearts open to a healthful influence. While we scatter flowers over their graves, we shall go and profit by the memory of their noble acts.

SERMON II.

PSALM lxxx. 14, 15.

RETURN, WE BESEECH THEE, O GOD OF HOSTS : LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND BEHOLD, AND VISIT THIS VINE, AND THE VINEYARD WHICH THY RIGHT HAND HATH PLANTED.

No doubt, during a portion of the time which is now to fall under review, this prayer was often uttered. In this language many an oppressed heart unburdened itself before the throne of the Most High, for the vine which he had transplanted here, and before which he had made room in the wilderness, so that it struck deep root, and grew and flourished, was now beginning to languish, and the vineyard was neglected, and the laborers who were called, came not, and the rebukes of the Lord God of Hosts were upon it.

We are now entering on a barren period of our history. The original settlers had disappeared, or were fast vanishing, and the next generation were, in many respects, far their inferiors. It could hardly be otherwise. They had enjoyed few opportunities of intellectual culture. Such virtues as the wilderness could teach, they possessed. They had grown up amid circumstances fitted to confer a sort of rough independence. They were specimens of what men born to their stern and rugged lot, subjected from infancy to all the adverse influences of a life in the wilds, must be. They were true of heart, doubtless, and faithful according to their means; the work Providence assigned them, they accomplished; but their annals are humble and obscure.

If, however, the history of the Plantation loses something of its interest from the absence of those under whose guiding influence, its affairs had been hitherto so faithfully conducted, this is not the only circumstance to be deplored by one who attempts to construct a narrative of the ecclesiastical concerns of the Town. The destruction, or disappearance of records is an aggravating consideration. The mild light thus far shed over our path by the manuscripts of the first Pastor no longer cheers our passage, and we are only rendered the more sensible of the surrounding darkness from having before enjoyed it. There is now a chasm in the ministerial records for a little more than half a century.* That such Records once existed is known, from the fact that they are quoted in the Sermon delivered from this place a century ago. But a fragment of a single leaf is all of them, which at this time, remains; nor is any thing known of their history.

From this fragment we learn, that as early as the latter part of March, 1672, a little more than six months after Mr. Allin's death, Mr. William Adams had received a call to the Pastoral office. He at first declined. Mr. Charles Nicholet, a stranger recently from Maryland, and who had come over after the re-establishment of Episcopacy under Charles II, and whom one of the committee of the Dedham church had chanced to hear at the Thursday Lecture in Boston, was then invited to preach, and soon after, to settle. He consented, but said that he must first go with his wife to Salem for "a child and some things" which they had left there. Of course no objection could be urged against so reasonable a request. But Mr. Nicholet, it seems, had before won the hearts of the people of Salem, and was as much a favorite there as here, and they were resolved to

* The Deacon's Book, which covers nearly the whole period, is still in existence, having been recently discovered and dragged from its lurking place where it had lain safely ensconced for years. It is chiefly a book of accounts, though not altogether so. During the time the Town was without a Minister, it records some votes and proceedings of the church, from which I have derived material aid. Portions of it are written in a blind, and all but unintelligible hand, equalled only by the wretchedness of the orthography.

take effectual means for retaining him. They managed the affair with some adroitness, and succeeded at last, as it appears, by female influence. "Both people and minister, men and women," so says the fragmentary document, "so set upon him and his wife with great and incessant importunity, that they first overcame Mrs. Nicholet to be willing to live at Salem, rather than at Dedham." The rest may be foreseen. Mr. Nicholet, after some show of resistance, yields. "He was so far staggered in his resolution," continues my authority, "that he would put the case to a counsel of Elders." The Elders assemble. The committee of Dedham, appear before them, argue the question, urge Mr. Nicholet's promise to return to them, and make the best of their case. But in vain. The Elders decide that, as matters stood, it were better for them to release Mr. Nicholet, than to "force" him to fulfil his promise, and they were wise enough to acquiesce. Mr. Nicholet went to Salem, and after a stormy ministry of three or four years, left, and returned to England.

The call to Mr. Adams was afterwards renewed and accepted, and his ordination took place the third of December, 1673.* From his receipts preserved in the Proprietor's books, and written in a small, fair, round hand, it appears that he received a salary of sixty pounds annually, eight pounds of which he relinquished one year, on account of the expenses of the town incurred during Philip's war. He also received a hundred pounds "towards procuring a place of habitation," as it is expressed. Some time after, the question of building him a house at the expense of the town was agitated, though the project seems never to have been carried into execution.†

* The Town, the whole of which was embraced in the Parochial See, or Charge, had now shrunk somewhat in its dimensions, Medfield and Wrentham, originally within its limits, having been incorporated as separate Towns, the former in 1650-1, and the latter in 1673. The ministerial Charge, now included, besides what constitutes the present Town of Dedham, Needham, Bellingham, Walpole, Dover, Natick, and part of Sherburne, and continued the same till after the settlement of Mr. Belcher, the successor of Mr. Adams.

† See Note G.

The Plantation had other expenses to meet. The war just alluded to could not be carried on without cost to the towns. A little before this time, too, the old thatched meeting house, no doubt somewhat frail at first, besides being too small, was found to be in a ruinous condition, and needed to be replaced by a better. This call was promptly met by the inhabitants, who voting in their primitive way, by red and white corn, decided to erect a new fabric. This was in 1672, before Mr. Adams' settlement. It was left to the select men, with a committee of three to be associated with them, to determine the dimensions and interior arrangements of the new house, and to make contracts relative to it. They decide to have "but three pair of stairs," one at the North, another at the East, and another at the South corners, the fore seat in the front gallery to be parted in the midst, and the rest to be open at both ends: the South gallery to be for men; the North to be appropriated to women and boys: the seats in the lower part of the house to be parted in the middle, by an aisle, the men to be ranged on one side, the women on the other.

Thus the ancient house disappeared with the generation which had erected it. It was a lowly edifice, but it differed not more from what we now see, than did the habits of its worshippers. They could patiently listen to a Sermon of an hour and a half, or two hours, and a prayer of one hour, and they could be edified by music extracted from the old New England Version of David's Psalms, which a modern ear would pronounce barbarous, and all this, not in a commodious fabric, well warmed by artificial heat, and cushioned, but seated on rough boards, and in a building through the gaping crevices of which all the winds of a New England winter found a ready admittance. How far our piety would bear this test, I leave to others to determine.

The new meeting house was finished in 1673. It was furnished with a bell, which, however, was not a luxury now enjoyed for the first time. Formerly indeed, the people assembled at beat of drum; but this custom had been long discontinued. I find no mention of it after the year 1646, when Ralph Day was allowed twenty shillings for "beating the drum at the meeting house for the time past, to be paid in cedar boards." As early as 1656, we hear of a bell, and when work was done on the high

way, it was rung, morning and noon, to summon the people to their task. Besides the person now appointed to "cause the bell to be sufficiently ringed on the Lord's day, and in season," the select men agree with Nathaniel Heaton to "whip dogs out of the meeting house, and to go upon errands for the reverend Elders, referring to the church, and to take care of cushion and glass, till further order be taken, and for his pains herein, he is to retain of the Town ten shillings for one whole year."

The old subject of seating persons in the meeting house now continually came up for discussion, and gave no small trouble, for some were not disposed to submit to the powers that were, and reason and argument were exhausted upon them in vain. The boys too occasioned further annoyance, and the law requiring that the select men should "take care for their orderly and suitable behavior in the house of God," and "for that end" that "meet seats" should be provided that they "may be watched over," four new seats were made, in the lower part of the house, one on the North side "against the end of the men's seats," and one before the men's seats in the middle row, and the other two in a corresponding position on the South side. Some years after, they had "the short seats by the pulpit stairs in the South West part of the meeting house," assigned them. All this time it seems a little extraordinary that it did not occur to the wise heads of the day to allow families to be seated together, so that the younger part of them would be under the immediate inspection of the older; but the very mention of such a project would probably, in the highest degree, have shocked their notions of propriety, for it was opposed to the prevailing sentiments and manners of the age.

One circumstance shows that whatever may have been the character of the inhabitants, at this period, the population of the Town was increasing. The meeting house had not been long erected before additional accommodation was wanted, and ten years after it was first occupied, we hear of a design to construct new galleries.*

* Another circumstance creditable to the Town deserves to be mentioned. In a list of the contributions of the several Towns for the erection of the "New College," a little before Mr. Adam's settlement, I find sixty-one

Mr. Adams enjoyed a brief ministry here of only twelve years. He died the 17th August, 1685. I have not been able to recover from oblivion any incidents of his life beyond those already mentioned, except that he was graduated at Harvard College in 1671; and in 1674, a year after his ordination, was married to Mary Manning, and some time after her death, to Alice Bradford, in 1680; by the former of whom he had three children, and by the latter four.

During his ministry Mr. Adams published two Sermons. The first was delivered the 21st Nov. 1678, on a day of General Fasting throughout the United Colonies on account of the calamities in which they were involved. The country had just been exposed to all the horrors of Indian Warfare, the flames of which were but recently extinguished; the loss of the charter was threatened, and the times, in other respects, wore a sad aspect. Under these circumstances a Fast was appointed, and the next year a Reforming Synod was convened at Boston to give counsel adapted to the state of the Colony. The Sermon of Mr. Adams was pertinent, and throws some light on the character of the age. The subject, as announced on the title page, is "The necessity of the pouring out of the spirit from on High, on a sinning and apostatizing people, set under judgment;" and truly the Discourse furnishes a frightful catalogue of the sins and miseries of the day, "war, sickness, and other shakings," such is its language, God having grown "weary of repenting concerning us," refusing to hear our prayer, and leaving us "under a dispensation of judgment," our troubles growing "more extensive, numerous, and general; and more intense, sharp, and piercing;" there being "little mourning for sin among us,"—little of a "praying frame," our prayers being "too cold, dead, formal, lifeless, insipid and wordy only," men and women remaining "heart whole," so that if a reform did not take place, "New England's ruin" would be the consequence.* The Dis-

pounds and twelve shillings set down to Dedham. This was a large sum for the period. Only six Towns contributed more. Roxbury gave short of thirty-eight, and Concord but little over thirty-three pounds.

* The result of the Synod gives a similar account of the sins of the times, though Hutchinson says that there is no evidence of any extraordinary degeneracy at the period referred to. Vol. 1, p. 292.

course breathes throughout a serious, devout, and fervent spirit. It is eminently practical, and though in the quaint manner of the day, is written in a clear and correct style. The language is pure Saxon English, and has at times much force and vigor, though plain and unadorned. The performance, as a whole, is certainly creditable to the author. The same may be said of the other, which was an Election Sermon, delivered May 27, 1685, a few months only before the author's death. If we may rely on the statements contained in this Discourse, the times certainly had not much mended since the delivery of the former. How much allowance is to be made for rhetorical exaggeration, I can not tell. I can only say, that for the credit of the land of the pilgrims, I hope some deduction is to be made on this score.

The Discourse though reputable for ability is a very long one: the text is opened and the doctrine stated in five propositions, or "conclusions," as they are called, then come the use, application, and the needful exhortations to rulers, clergy, and people. Among the errors and sins of the times, are mentioned neglect of the "Discipline of Christ and his churches," or only such attention to them as accorded with the "humors, affections, interests or relations of some men;"—"woful contentions in many churches;"—"dissentions, heart burnings, counteractings in courts and civil assemblies;"—"jealousies, reproaches, slanders, alienations of spirit, in churches and other societies, and between rulers and people." "We have borne too high a sail," says the writer: "there hath been an affectation of gallantry unbecoming our condition"—too great delicacy of living;"—"some with hearts lifted up above their brethren"—"too high to bear the execution of some good laws"—"family government and order in a great measure lost in New England;" and finally "the form of religion, to many lifted up therewith, is (as one speaks) a *Buff Coat* to their sins, to turn the sharpest reproofs that can be levelled against them." Hence calamities, frowns of Providence, sickness, pestilence, and the whole catalogue of human ills.

In a Preface to the first of these Sermons, by Mr. Samuel Torrey of Weymouth, and Josiah Flynt of Dorchester, father of

the celebrated Tutor Flynt, the writers speak of Mr. Adams as peculiarly fitted to promote the work of reformation so much needed, in this "more happy than most of his fellow servants," being himself "coetaneous with, and among the choicest of the first ripe fruits of this young generation." This was the new generation which had sprung up on the soil, and he had been born, and grown up in the midst of it. No doubt this circumstance was in his favor, and altogether, there is reason to think, that the Town possessed in Mr. Adams a worthy Pastor, who only wanted a longer ministry in order to hold an eminent rank among his cotemporaries and brethren, according to the standard of the age. He had as much theological learning, I suppose, as was possessed by most of the New England clergy of the day. In a book afterwards used for the Parish Records, and still preserved, he began, a little more than two years before his death, an exposition of the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy, which he did not live to finish. His commentary is exceedingly elaborate and minute, and though it proceeds no further than the tenth verse of the first chapter, covers sixty-three quarto pages, in Mr. Adams peculiarly small and compact hand.

The Town was now without a Pastor for about eight years. The aspect of things here was not encouraging; at least, there were some circumstances of a disheartening nature, which seemed, in the opinion of several whom the people were desirous to obtain, to preclude the hope of a peaceful and happy ministry, and they declined coming, and truly the vineyard mourned. Mr. Bowles first received a call, January, 1685, the inhabitants voting together, without distinction of communicants, and non-communicants, it being decided in a general meeting, that "the church and Town will act together as one," the church taking no separate vote. To this measure no one objected, the church members present acquiescing.*

Mr. Samuel Lee was afterwards invited, by a separate act of the church and Town. In their vote and subsequent request to him to come and settle with them, they pathetically bewail the miseries which had fallen upon them. They speak of their

* See Note H.

“low estate by reason of their long continued vacancy and emptiness for want of a settled ministry;” they add, “our earnest and humble request to you is, that you may be pleased to consider of our sad, languishing state under our long bereavement, and we hope that you will in your wisdom consider our weakness, and make it an argument of pity, and we earnestly desire that you will consider this place as a field white to the harvest.”*

The application, however, was unsuccessful. In 1687, a similar invitation from the congregation, the church subsequently concurring, was declined by Mr. Jonathan Pierpont, on the ground, as he says in his answer, “of the present circumstances of things with yourselves, and those discouragements which yourselves are not ignorant of, together with the probable uncomfortableness which might accrue to yourselves and to the person desired.”

Mr. John Rogers of Ipswich, and Mr. Nathaniel Clap, the younger, the latter after three calls, gave a negative to a request to “come, and live, and labor here,” in the office of the christian ministry. I believe, that one or more other calls were given during this interval, but whether this was the case or not, is of too little consequence to make it worth while to pore longer over the terrible records of the period.

The prospect now certainly looked dark. The people thus repeatedly disappointed, deeply deplored their desolate condition, it being “as unnatural,” says the suthor of the Wonder-Working Providence, “for a right New England man to live without an able ministry, as for a smith to work his iron without fire.” But light was soon to break out of darkness. On the 23d May, 1692, we find, that Mr. Joseph Belcher had already received a call from the church and Town, and the select men are deputed to urge him to accept, and not delay his coming to live in the place. As an encouragement, the people offer him sixty pounds towards providing him a habitation, and he is to receive an annual salary of the same amount, subsequently increased to one hundred pounds. Wood to the value of ten pounds, at five shillings a cord, was afterwards added; or the amount was paid him in money.

* See Note I.

Mr. Belcher* was ordained Nov. 29, 1693. During his ministry a change was introduced in the mode of collecting the ministerial rate, which, as it illustrates the revolutionary process which was silently going on in men's opinions, I will proceed briefly to state. For some time past the amount to be raised was apportioned in the same manner as the Provincial, or as they were called, country rates. The inhabitants, from sabbath to sabbath, then put into a box prepared for the purpose, such sums as might be convenient, enclosed in a paper containing the name of the contributor, and whatever was not thus enclosed in a wrapper was considered as a donation. On examining the box, the Deacons, who had custody of the money, marked against every man's name the sum he had from time to time contributed, in the book to which we have already referred, and which forms a somewhat curious relic of the times.

Such continued to be the usage of the Town at the time of Mr. Belcher's settlement. No compulsory process, I believe, had as yet been resorted to. Occasionally there was found to be a deficiency at the end of the year. So early as the last year of Mr. Allin's ministry, mention occurs of some arrears, which were due to him, and the next year, 1672, the Deacons inform the select men of some "shortness in the coming in of the money" for the Pastor, and John Aldis is chosen to assist them in collecting the needed sum of the "several inhabitants according to their rates." For this purpose reasoning and remonstrance, and occasionally an "exhortation," in which the subject was "handled out of scripture," were the only weapons employed, and these in the main, had proved sufficient.

One exception to this mode now occurs, under circumstances which, as I think, clearly show that the amount necessary to the support of public worship was not paid into the Deacon's treasury without many and growing murmurs. At the annual March meeting in 1695-6, as the Records inform us, Mr. Belcher makes a proposition to the inhabitants, that if they will pay his salary for the coming quarter, he will accept a voluntary

* The name is printed erroneously, Bachelor, in the Collections of the Mass. Hist. Soc. vol. ix. p. 195, first Series. The same error occurs in the General Index, vol. x, p. 233.

contribution for the remaining three quarters of the year. At the next annual meeting, he professes himself satisfied with what had been done for him, and it is agreed to try the experiment another year. But the result was not such as to induce a wish to continue it, and the subsequent year the Town returns to the old method, that of voluntary contribution being abandoned not to be revived. But times had changed; the mode successful in former years, now proves ineffectual, and it is found necessary to adopt the compulsory process. In November, 1704, a vote is passed making it the duty of the select men, after fixing the rates, to prepare two lists, one to be presented to the Deacons, that they might receive them either in the box, as before mentioned, or in private, if any chose so to pay, and the other to be handed over to the constables, who were required to collect immediately at the expiration of the year, (the 14th of February was subsequently adopted,) all such sums as were reported by the Deacons as not paid.

At the same time, ample indulgence was granted to those, who found it convenient to worship elsewhere, they having liberty to pay their rates where they worshipped, but if they did not pay elsewhere, they were compelled to pay here. A vote to this effect was passed the 4th of March, 1700, and the principle recognized in it, was afterwards adhered to, occasionally, however, modified in practice by the votes of the Town. By a vote passed in 1706, the select men were authorised to grant permission, for the time being, for persons to worship elsewhere, such persons being released from obligation to pay here.

Another subject to which the attention of the Town was frequently called, during the period under review, was the condition of the meeting house. In 1695, it was voted to erect galleries "over the other galleries." The next year, mention is made of erecting a single seat over the galleries "as near the roof as may be convenient." This may have been all that was meant by the upper galleries. The seat over the women's gallery was for "young women and maids to sit in." The expense of these additions, as also of some necessary repairs on the "outside covering, and the platform above," was voluntarily shared, as had been the original expense of erecting the house,

by the neighboring people of Roxbury, who worshipped here, and whose liberality is often noticed in the Records.

Still, however, room continued to be wanted, and in November, 1700, the Town passed a resolve to enlarge the meeting house by an addition of from twelve to fourteen feet on the West side, and for this purpose they make a grant of thirty pounds, to be paid in money, labor, or grain, wheat being then at five shillings a bushel, rye at four, Indian corn at three, and labor at two shillings a day.

About two years after this, we for the first time hear of pews, a vote being passed allowing such persons as a committee chosen for the purpose should approve, to erect them at their own expense, "on the sides of the meeting house below that were without seats." Other alterations were, at the same time, made, which it is unnecessary to describe.

From a Preface, by Dr. Increase Mather, to the last published Sermon of Mr. Belcher, preached at an ordination in Bristol, the 30th August, 1721, it appears that between that time, and the 28th December, the date of the Preface, Mr. Belcher had a dangerous attack of paralysis. Some months after, the Town meet to "consider and do what they see meet to procure him help in his weakness," and they vote to take a contribution every Sunday for two months, the time being subsequently extended, and a committee chosen to supply the pulpit. He died at Roxbury, the 27th April, 1723, and was brought to Dedham for burial, with such observance, as respect and affection dictated, and the usage of the day required.*

Of Mr. Belcher's personal history scarcely any thing is known. He belonged, as I conjecture, to the Braintree family, then numerous, and was graduated at Harvard University in 1690. He had daughters married in town, but few of his descendants now remain among us. An unmarried son lived some years with a niece in the West Parish, specimens of whose eccentric wit and humor are still handed down in the traditions of the place. I

* The sum of two pounds and four shillings was paid to Lieut. Joshua Fisher, "for entertaining men and their horses, that came" to the funeral, and eight years after, the Town voted to allow "Madam Belcher" forty pounds for expenses to which she had been subjected on the same occasion.

suppose "Sir" Belcher, whose name frequently occurs in the records, to have been a brother.

Mr. Belcher lived, says his immediate successor, "much desired, and died greatly lamented in the 53d year of his age, and 30th of his ministry." Cotton Mather, who had contributed a complimentary Preface to his first printed Sermon, now paid a tribute to his memory in a Discourse preached at a Lecture in Boston, May 2d, 1723, and afterwards published. If we may trust the author of this Sermon, and I see no reason in the present case to doubt his fidelity, Mr. Belcher ranked high in the estimation of those who best knew him. The Discourse is entitled, "A Good Character, or a Walk with God Illustrated, with some Dues paid to the Memory of the Late Rev. and Excellent Pastor of Dedham." "We have had," says the writer, "an excellent Preacher to walk with God, who was an excellent Pattern of what he preached to us,—who lived what he spoke, and did what he taught,"—"he was one of that holy set, that so lessons every day among us."—Among his virtues enumerated, we find prudent speech, by which he avoided what according to a "computation of the ancients makes half the sins of our lives," his rule being to say nothing of those of whom "there was not much good to be spoken," that he might not be tempted to speak evil. "A gentlemanly temper and carriage, with a certain sweetness of disposition," added lustre to his other virtues.

As a Preacher he was, as Mather informs us, "greatly admired and followed—he fed us, not with jejune and stolen sermons, but with well studied composures." He was modest and retiring, declining to appear on occasions of publicity, unless when compelled to it. As a Pastor he "faithfully" and "painfully fed the whole flock," by an act of self denial, says the same authority, adhering to them, though "under strong temptation to have embraced greater opportunities." Against a shepherd of so much goodness, he continues, "it would seem impossible that any mouth should open. If any did, his worst word upon it was, 'Father forgive them.'" Much more is added, and in a tone of friendly eulogy, which would seem to prove the writer, in this case at least, to have been sincere. The character is evidently drawn by the hand of affection, and though in point of execution, it par-

takes of the usual faults of Mather's style, there can be little doubt, I think, that the main features are correctly given.

Mr. Belcher's printed Sermons,* possess different degrees of merit. They are all, however, written in a devout spirit, and though like those of his predecessor, a little quaint at times, are marked by good sense and vigorous thought.

But the most curious document, connected with Mr. Belcher, I have met with, is a manuscript volume containing a sort of Diary, and particularly an enumeration of the presents brought him by his Parishioners, not omitting those of the most trifling value. Strange things are here sometimes brought into juxtaposition. The whole, however, shows a people of primitive habits, strongly attached to their Pastor, and presenting him such little offerings as they could, if greater were not in their power.

I know not on what authority a Letter said to have been found in his study after his death, and subsequently printed and circulated on a loose sheet, on the question, "how to live in this world, so as to live in heaven," is attributed to him. It contains some quite graphic touches, especially in several allusions of a personal nature relative to the author's temper, feelings, and general views of life, portraying a character of somewhat retiring habits, of great thoughtfulness and tranquillity, and of a filial and trusting piety; and if Mr. Belcher was the writer, it is a worthy relic of a worthy man, in a few vigorous and rapid lines conveying to us more knowledge of his real character, than Mather would have furnished in as many pages.

This account of Mr. Belcher and the religious affairs of the Town, during his ministry is meager enough, but the documents in my possession do not enable me to present a different or more extended one. If in the use of some of the materials afforded me, and out of which I have constructed this and other portions of my narrative, I may be thought to have descended too much to particulars, I can only say in explanation, that a degree of minuteness, when I could command it, seemed to me to comport with the object I had in view: that statements of the kind alluded to, partaking somewhat of the nature of Parochial statistics,

* See Note K.

have their use as throwing light on the history of the age, helping to body forth its manners and habits of thought. Besides, a degree of minuteness is not out of place in local histories, like that in which I am at present engaged, and from these, general history must derive some of its best materials.

The Ecclesiastical history of New England is yet to be written, and if it is ever executed in a style worthy of the subject, it can only be by the aid of authentic details of the religious affairs of Towns and Parishes.

As I stated, at the commencement of my labors, my object is not so much to give a discourse, as a history, embracing such incidents and biographical notices as may seem appropriate and useful, and worth rescuing from the dust and oblivion to which they are hastening. If by any care of mine, I shall contribute to their preservation, I shall feel that my labors among blind manuscripts and rusty and obscure relics, are sufficiently rewarded. Nor is the toil itself without alleviation and pleasure. It is no unmeet task in the few leisure moments, which can be snatched from professional duties, to retire into the past, to cull its treasures, and

“If studious, copy fair what time hath blurr’d;
Redeem truth from his jaws.”



SERMON III.

PSALM lxxviii, 7.

THAT THEY MIGHT SET THEIR HOPE IN GOD.

A little more than three months after the death of Mr. Belcher, under date July 6th, 1723, it stands recorded in the manuscript Diary of a then obscure young man, of great modesty and diffidence—"Went to Dedham to preach,"—and making up his journal the next day he writes,—“was somewhat dashed and confused in morning prayer.” As this young man is to occupy some space in these brief notices of the past, as he left here an honored memory, and bore a name since not unknown to fame, it may be gratifying, before we proceed with our narrative, especially as we possess so authentic a source of information as his own private journal, to go back a little, and gather up a few incidents connected with his personal history previously to the above mentioned date.

The young preacher was a native of Malden. He was born on the 23d October, 1700, and descended from that worthy old stock of New England yeomanry, to whose substantial virtues their country has been indebted from the first, for a full proportion of its prosperity and honors. He joined the church in his native place at the age of twenty, and a short time after, July 1720, received his first degree at Harvard University, after which he taught school six months in Taunton, then, to be nearer his friends, in Lynn, where he remained one year. He then returned to Malden, engaged in a short school there, after which

he devoted his time to a more special preparation for the ministry. He preached for the first time the 15th October, 1722.

Next spring he received an invitation to settle at Brimfield, which he declined, afterwards one at Medford, and another at Westborough, to both of which he gave a negative.

Under great depression of spirits, and suffering from ill health, he for a time refuses to preach at Charlestown, not being able to summon courage to appear in such a congregation. "It is," says he, "contrary to my disposition. I abundantly rather choose retiredness, and if I might be my own carver, an assembly in the country, though it were but small, would more gratify me." A second call at Medford was afterwards received, and by the advice of Mr. Colman, Wadsworth and others, declined, the fourth which had been extended to him within a year, much to his own surprise. "It is a great wonder to me," he says, "that people do in any way like my performances—they are so mean and poor—I am less than the least of the candidates for the ministry, yet the Lord does so smile upon me."

His desponding temper and disposition to take gloomy views of things, appears, at this time, to have been known to himself, and to have been vigorously combatted. He speaks of being very melancholy and discouraged, and adds, "This is so much my natural disposition, that it makes my life very weary. O, that God would dissipate the dark clouds, and alter my temper to an easy, quiet, submissive, and circumspect disposition."

This young man, thus timid and shrinking, often laboring under a nervous depression of spirits, with a humility which was proof against flattery, and a piety bordering on asceticism, was Samuel Dexter.

He was now about to settle at Yarmouth, but having, Oct. 14, 1723, received a call here, the Town offering him a salary of one hundred pounds, and a hundred and fifty as an outfit, he yielded the preference to Dedham, though it was long before he could summon resolution to reply to its invitation. "My fears," says he, "do multiply on me," and when, six weeks after, a committee called on him and requested his answer, he was perplexed, and says, he "put them off for that time." His answer, however, which is an exceedingly well written document, and

full of the right spirit, bearing date Malden, Dec. 6, was at length sent, and on the 15th, was communicated. His trials were now augmented. The next day, says he, being at Dedham, "several of my friends came in to see me, and one Rabshakeh to revile me." He is depressed, discouraged, dismayed, tempted to give up and quit the ministry forever. However, he persevered, and his ordination took place on the 6th of May, 1724.*

Those who are acquainted by tradition, or otherwise, with the circumstances under which he entered on the ministry in this place, and the feelings manifested by some few, in regard to the proceedings relative to his call, may readily imagine, that to one possessing his peculiar temperament, the position he occupied here, could not for some time, at least, have been of the most pleasing character. In fact, the earlier part of his ministry was somewhat tempestuous.

Before we proceed to recount his troubles, however, we must mention a felicity he now enjoyed. In speaking of the events which had happened to him during the year, he says, under date, 23d October, 1724, a little more than five months after his settlement, "I have been ordained Pastor of a church, and I have married a wife. The lines have fallen to me in a pleasant place for situation, though the people are not so easy and agreeable as might be wished for, but they are better than I deserve, and my companion is a kind, tender, and virtuous person. I hope I have in her that good thing which is from the Lord." So she proved. She survived her husband, Mr. Dexter, almost half a century. Sometime after his death, she married Samuel Barnard, Esq. of Salem, after whose decease she returned to finish her days in Dedham, where she continued to be universally beloved and respected, and enjoyed a tranquil and happy old age. She died on the 10th of June, 1797, having nearly completed her ninety-fifth year.†

* Erroneously stated 1723, in Mass. Hist. Coll. first series, vol. ix, p. 196. The limits of the Town, See, or Parish, had now become still further contracted. Needham and Bellingham had been incorporated during Mr. Belcher's ministry. Walpole was incorporated Dec. 1724, a few months after Mr. Dexter's ordination.

† See Note L.

The difficulties which rent the church and town for some years after Mr. Dexter's induction into office, were, very few of them, I believe, of a personal nature, though some of them, perhaps, might have been. In his journal under date of Feb. 13, 1724—5, the winter subsequent to his ordination, he speaks of the trouble given him by "unreasonable men," unreasonable, he says, he thinks he may "without any breach of charity" term them. "Their actions are so extraordinary," he says, "that they seem to be under a hellish impetus, when all the while they charge it upon conscience." The church records, of the same period, give evidence of a highly excited state of feeling on the part of some dissatisfied members, and after fruitless attempts at conciliation, a council was convened on the 14th of June, 1725, which censured the diaffected brethren for irregular withdrawing from the communion, and indulging in illiberal and unjust reflections on the other members of the church. After this, there was for a short time an apparent calm, but the fire was still smouldering under the ashes, and soon again burst forth.

It is not my intention to pursue the history of these bickerings, over which it were well that the curtain of oblivion should be forever drawn. Nor shall I attempt to decide on whom the folly and guilt of these, and of others which followed, rested. That Mr. Dexter was not always prudent, is very possible. When on a certain occasion he announced to his congregation, that the ministers of the association had agreed to hold fasts in rotation in their several Parishes, and that the second would be holden in Dedham, he observes that "none publicly objected," though one had been heard to say previously, that the "ministers were going to deprive the churches of their power." But when the day came, some were absent from the exercises, continuing about their usual business. This they had certainly a right to do, but the Pastor made a serious matter of it, and on the next Sunday proceeded to reprehend them. This was certainly indiscreet. It of course irritated them, and called forth many severe remarks.

Whether it was in reference to the controversy growing out of this circumstance, or something else, that some very strong expressions which occur in the Journal, were penned, I cannot

say. It is quite certain that the dissensions in the place, in whatever source they originated, weighed heavily on the spirits of the young Pastor. He was in the habit of frequently observing days of private fasting and prayer, on which he practised rigid self scrutiny, for he was always a most severe judge of himself. The topics previously marked out to be made subjects of prayer on these days, are in many instances recorded, and among the rest we find the "shocking troubles" he met with, by "reason of the difficulties which prevailed in the church and town." These form the burden of many a heavy line, altogether presenting so sad a picture of the religious and social condition of the community, that our only marvel is, not that his feelings were not always calm, but, if there be no exaggeration in the case, how life passed in such a state of ferment could have been endurable.

In addition to other causes of excitement, the desire, very reasonable in itself, of several inhabitants living in the southerly and westerly parts of the town, to be allowed to form themselves into a separate precinct, occasioned, for a time, no little perturbation of feeling. Several projects were brought forward and one after another rejected. One was, for two ministers to be supported at the charge of the town; another to remove the meeting house to a point more central; or to erect a new one so situated that it would accommodate the whole town with the exception of Springfield Corner, now Dover, propositions which were repeatedly renewed, but always without success. The General Court was petitioned for permission to form a distinct precinct, but the town remonstrated against the petition. In this train affairs proceeded for some years, the town for one year only, employing a second minister to preach in the southerly part of it. An act of incorporation for the south Parish, then including the west, being obtained in 1730, at length gave hope of a speedy termination of a very unpleasant controversy. The quiet of the old Precinct, however, was again for a short time disturbed by the movements attending the formation of the West Parish, and the controversy still lingered in the church, that body for some time refusing to dismiss its members to form a

new church by its side. It finally submitted to a necessity it could not control; and the waters of strife subsided.

Henceforward, the stream of our narrative is to flow in a narrower channel. The affairs of the first, or Old Parish, and not those of the town, are to engage our attention.

The first meeting of the Parish, as a separate precinct, was holden by virtue of a justice's warrant, the 4th of January, 1730—1. The subject of the pastor's salary soon came up for discussion, and, no doubt, in consequence of the fluctuation of the circulating medium, presented a question of some real difficulty, which was constantly recurring through the whole of Mr. Dexter's ministry. Unquestionably, he at times suffered greatly from the depreciation of the currency. To this subject I find no allusion in his private Diary, or in the records of the church kept by him: not a murmur or discontented expression is left on record by him: all the information we possess on the subject is derived from the Parish books. From these it appears, that he, for some years, continued to receive of the Parish the hundred pounds originally agreed upon, the church, however, in addition, voting, about a year after his settlement, May 18th, 1725, to "appropriate the profits of the lands commonly known as Parsonage" to his use, "during the term of his continuance in office among them." In 1734, fifty pounds were added to his salary, which was continued for some years. I suppose it may be taken as evidence of his straitened circumstances, that in 1737, a bill of five pounds was granted him for "keeping the meeting house" the past year, and a bill for a similar, and finally for a larger amount, was allowed him for many years, sometimes in the form above expressed, for "keeping," or "taking care of the meeting house," and sometimes for "his negro's taking care" of it, ringing the bell, and at last, performing the whole duty of Sexton.

In March 1738—9, in consequence of his representations of the rise of provisions and depreciation of the currency, ten pounds, new tenor, were added to the one hundred and fifty, old tenor, of which he was at that time in the receipt. For some years after, the yearly sum granted him was voted sometimes in bills of the new, and sometimes of the old tenor; thus sixty pounds, new

tenor, one year, and a hundred and fifty, old tenor, the next, with thirty for providing wood from the church lot; then fifty pounds, lawful money. A committee was then appointed to "inquire respecting the fall of paper money," since the time of his settlement, for the purpose of ascertaining, whether according to the "original contract" he had any unsatisfied claims on the Parish. His salary was then raised to sixty pounds, new tenor, and during the years 1745 and 1746, quarterly contributions for him were taken by vote of the Parish, "on account," as it is expressed, "of the fall of paper money." These contributions were afterwards repeated; questions of currency were discussed annually at the Parish meetings; committees of finance, if we may use so dignified a term in this connection, were appointed, and both Pastor and Parish were subjected to no little trouble and inconvenience. Mr. Dexter's salary at the time of his death, I believe, was eighty pounds, lawful money, and wood, and the use of the parsonage lands in addition.

During the period now under review, I have been able to gather from old records but few materials of pleasing reflection. Nor have I much to add. The meeting house, from time to time underwent various repairs in its several parts, being as I should think from the incidental notices, and description given of it in the Records, in a much dilapidated state. Near the close of Mr. Dexter's ministry pews began to be erected to some extent, by permission of the Parish, on condition that when to be sold the first offer of them should be made to the society. Two new bells were procured within twelve years; the Deacon's wives, by vote of the Parish, were seated in front of the second pew on the South side of the meeting house; and the boys were kept in order, sometimes by a person paid for the purpose, and sometimes by a voluntary association of persons, who agreed to watch them in rotation a certain number of sabbaths in the year.

The first notice of Episcopalianism I have met with in the Records, occurs under date 8th March, 1734, when Joseph Smith, Noah Kingsbury, Joseph Aspenwall, John Downe, Benjamin Holden, and Peter Violas, had their ministerial taxes remitted on the ground that they carried on the worship of God "in the way of the established church of England;" they sub-

sequently exhibiting a certificate of the fact, signed by Dr. Cutler of Boston. This was eight years before the passage of the law making it the duty of Towns and Parishes to allow the taxes of such as attended worship in an Episcopal church, to go to the support of the minister on whose instructions they attended.

In the Records of the church and Parish I find no direct allusion to the excitements on the subject of religion, produced by the itinerant preaching of the wild and erratic Whitfield, during his second visit to this country. In his private journal, Mr. Dexter, under date of 1740, speaks of having, he does not say where, heard him with great delight, and he hoped with benefit, and the church book without specifying a cause for any extraordinary attention to religion, records an unusual number of admissions into the church in December and January, of the years 1741 and 1742. On the 4th March, 1742, the church observes a day of fasting and prayer, and renews its covenant. On the 7th of the same month a vote is passed, dispensing with a relation of christian experiences on the part of persons becoming members of the church, provided the party satisfies the Pastor, and any of the brethren, who may choose to call, in private, and assents, in public, to the received confession of faith and form of covenant.

Mr. Dexter's private Journal ceases with December 5th, 1752, under which date he records the death of his mother, Winnifred Dexter, at the age of seventy-nine. Her maiden name was Sprague. He survived her a little more than two years. He died after a short illness, the 29th January, 1755, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and thirtieth of his ministry. His death is recorded in the church book, with a simple and affectionate eulogium, more honorable than all the pomp of sculptured panegyric. He died as he had lived, enjoying the general respect and confidence of his people and of the public.

His peculiar sensitiveness, as we have seen, caused his feelings to be keenly affected by the opposition, which he encountered during the earlier portion of his ministry. But the disaffected persons being found chiefly among that portion of his flock, who afterwards constituted the West Parish, when that was incorporated, calmer days appeared. His disposition was pacific,

and nothing seems afterwards to have occurred to deprive him of the sweets of harmony and affection so desirable both to Pastor and people.

Mr. Dexter's Sermons were written in a serious and practical style, without any attempt at ornament or fine writing. He had little imagination, or eloquence; he addressed chiefly the understanding, but there was a warmth, a fervor, a truth in his piety, which, united with good sense, so pervaded all his performances, that while the intellect was awakened, the heart could hardly remain cold and insensible.

I am not aware that he published more than two Sermons, one, in 1728, on the death, by casualty, of an esteemed young man in his Parish,* and the other his Century Discourse, ten years after. This, which was printed soon after its delivery, and went through a second edition in 1796, is too well known to require analysis. As a historical document, it is not of great value, not more than half a dozen pages out of fifty-four, besides a short Appendix, having any special reference to the Town, or to its history, civil or religious. Near its commencement the author says that "his acquaintance either by private records or particular traditional accounts, with the special circumstances of the original and progress" of the town and church, was not such as to furnish him with materials of a history.

Yet many sources of information must have been open to him, to which we have not access; important written documents existed, which are not now to be found; and many an old tradition might have been gathered from living lips, which has now long since perished. It is to be regretted that some portion of the information, which might have been gathered from these sources, had not been arrested in its passage to oblivion, that something might have been added to our present scanty stock of knowledge.

* "A Call from the Dead to the Living. In a Sermon on occasion of the early and surprising, though comfortable death of Mr. Timothy Metcalf, a very hopeful young man, who received his death wound on Saturday, Aug. 12, 1727, and exchanged, as we trust, earth for Heaven on Monday following, aged 19. By Samuel Dexter, M. A. Pastor of the Church in Dedham. Boston, 1728." The wound was inflicted by a fall "upon the tine of a fork."

I have not the means of portraying in their minuter shades, the character and condition of the Parish as it was at that time. In its territorial limits, it was much the same as now, except in name, for though Dover and Natick, or a part of it, still in some sort adhered to it, the connexion was very loose. Those living at the distance of five miles and more, had, by vote of the Parish, been discharged from paying "head money," as it was called, and several, bringing certificates from the Rev. Oliver Peabody, who had a church at Natick, composed partly of English, and partly of Indians, were absolved from obligation to pay ministerial rates here.

Here stood the old Church, with its double row of galleries, a raised Platform with seats along the North and South walls, the floor also occupied with seats, two or three pews only being erected at the sides. A cupola, or rude turret, written in the record, *terril*, rose from the centre, surmounted, not by a high steeple, but by a short pole, or staff, as it appeared to the eye, serving merely to support a vane. The bell was rung by a person standing in the body seats in the central part of the house below. There was no ceiling above, nor were the sides plastered, and the whole interior appeared thickly studded with spars.

Four persons occupied the Deacon's seat, there being so many then in office. The remainder of the assembly took the places assigned them by the Parochial authorities. The Psalm from the Old New England Version was sung after the manner of the day, one of the Deacon's leading. The village about the meeting house had not then risen, the people living chiefly on their farms, the population of the place being as yet almost exclusively agricultural, marked by simple and primitive tastes and habits, and all those hardy virtues, which so honorably distinguished the founders and defenders of our liberties and prosperity.

The habits of the people had been little changed during the century which had passed away. Their position was in some sort insulated. The wilderness was still around them. Inheriting something of the old feeling, which induced the first settlers to wish to call the new plantation by the name of Contentment,

they were too well satisfied with their lot to feel any strong desire to desert their homes in search of better. They were content to remain as they were. They had no roving propensity, and they placed too high a value on their pleasant heritage, their green farms, and their sunny slopes by the hill side, and on the banks of their beautiful river, to be willing to share them with any stranger who should choose to sit down among them. They were somewhat jealous of intruders, and as the town was originally the property of the company, or Proprietaries, and the undivided portions of it remained such still, they had the means in some measure of causing their wills to be respected. Whoever would come and partake of their goodly inheritance, must first obtain leave, and this was not easy, unless he could make it appear probable by good and sufficient reasons, that he would be a desirable neighbor. The consequence was that old feelings, habits, and manners were retained.

Some modification of character, however, might be detected, by the observant eye. Many improvements had been made, but some imperfections were visible. At the end of a century, and earlier, complaints were uttered on the subject of the neglect of intellectual education in the Town. Mr. Dexter, in his century sermon, after speaking of the regard, which the Fathers of New England had shown to "necessary and useful learning," to promote which they had "in the days of their weakness, burdens, and impoverishments" liberally contributed, adds, "let this shame us out of our regardlessness to that which is better than money and farms.—I think it is beyond dispute," he says, "a rare thing to find among us, men of a common character, that can use their pens as many of our Fathers could." This was said in 1738.

Undoubtedly, as I have said, the original settlers of Massachusetts, and of this place, in particular, were as a class, better educated than those who occupied the stage after their removal. This was, in some measure, the natural result of circumstances and situation. The first planters came from the intelligent circles, the learned halls, and Universities of Old England. When they fixed themselves in this desert, it was impossible for them, however strong their desire, to give their children, and the com-

ing generation, the means of the same thorough intellectual training which they had enjoyed. What they could they did. They endowed a College, and they founded schools. It is not surprising that amid the hardships of a life in the wilderness, and the perils and sufferings of Indian warfare, the high impulses which had urged the fathers onward, and which rendered the cause of good learning dear to their hearts, should have yielded to the dominion of other feelings, or become narrowed and chilled in the breasts of their descendants. So it was. And it was not till the consequences of the want of a better education began in various ways to manifest themselves that attention to its interests revived.

Mr. Dexter lived after the delivery of his century sermon a little more than sixteen years. The people were not dilatory in their endeavors to fill the vacancy occasioned by his removal. Seven months only after his death we find the Parish prepared to elect a successor, and they desire the church "as soon as they see meet to come to the choice of a minister." Mr. Jason Haven was chosen, and the Parish concurring, vote him one hundred and thirty-three pounds, six shillings and eight pence, "as an encouragement to settle" here, and an annual salary of sixty-six pounds, thirteen shillings, and eight pence, and twenty cords of wood, "during the time of his carrying on the work of the ministry" in the place. The church grant, in addition, "the use and improvement" of their lot of land near the meeting house, being the whole square between this spot and the burial ground, now mostly covered by buildings, as also three pieces of meadow, and one pasture, the latter on the Medfield road, "to till, mow, and feed," as the Record has it, during the term of his ministry. The invitation was renewed at a second Parish meeting called, as it appears, at the request of some dissatisfied members. The answer was conditional, some expressions occurring in the votes and offers of the Parish which appeared to Mr. Haven exceptionable. The Parish refused to recede. The difference however, was soon adjusted, and the 4th of Feb. 1756, fixed upon as the day of ordination. The Council assembled at the time appointed, but objections being urged on the part of some brethren of the church, the first day was passed in hearing

and deliberating upon them. These being disposed of, the Council vote to proceed to ordination the next day, the 5th of February, when the services took place, Mr. Appleton of Cambridge preaching. It is due to Mr. Haven here to state, that in a note to a Sermon preached forty years after, he observes that he had the satisfaction of soon numbering the few members of the church and Parish opposed to his settlement, among his "kind, affectionate and confidential friends, and such," says he, "they continued to the end of their lives."

The affairs of the Parish were now for many years conducted with peace and harmony. Men's attention was soon turned to other subjects than those of theological controversy; and petty and local jealousies, and the miserable warfare, which is too often carried on in matters of a religious nature, and frequently about points of very trifling importance, were forgotten. The revolutionary struggle soon commenced, and this Parish in common with others, felt very severely the weight of public burdens. These they bore with unflinching fortitude. The Parish records afford ample testimony of the alacrity with which the people met requisitions for money and men, and of the magnitude of their sacrifices and efforts in a cause which they all deemed holy.

Among other difficulties of the times were those which arose from the unsettled condition of the currency, and these were felt in Parochial concerns, without however, leading to any serious interruption of quiet and harmony. Mr. Haven, as observed, was to receive in money a salary of sixty-six pounds, and a fraction over. In 1670, it is raised to eighty, as, say the Parish in a very complimentary vote, "his ministerial labors are very acceptable to us," and we are "desirous that he meet with suitable encouragement therein, and to testify the sense we have of his abilities and faithfulness." Four years after, they manifested their liberality by granting a weekly contribution to procure preaching for him during a fit of sickness. In 1779, a monthly contribution was voted in addition to his usual salary, and afterwards, five hundred and twenty pounds were added, on account, as it is expressed, "of the rise of the necessaries of life." So great was the depreciation of the currency at this time, that in voting the salary of next year, the Parish add sev-

enteen hundred and twenty pounds to the standing sum of eighty. The subsequent year the sum was fixed at eighty pounds in hard money, or its equivalent. Nine hundred pounds, were at this time paid by the Parish to procure a pall to be used at funerals.

Some years after, there was a further fluctuation, but additional detail is unnecessary. In 1786, the church grants one year's interest of its funds, the first of the kind I have observed, towards the Pastor's salary, which the Parish accepts and passes a vote of thanks to the church for the grant. After the year 1792, a similar grant was frequently made at the request of the Parish, but it was not till a somewhat later period that the custom obtained of making the grant annual, and this custom was afterwards sometimes broken through. The whole expenses of the Parish were as yet frequently assessed.

At the time of Mr. Haven's settlement the meeting house had stood more than eighty years. A new one was now in the opinion of the Parish needed, which they soon proceeded to erect with that unanimity which marked all the transactions of this period. The vote to build was passed the 16th March, 1661. At an adjourned meeting it was decided that the structure should be sixty-feet long, and forty-six wide, that it should have a steeple and two porches, the height to be such as to preserve the architectural proportions. At the same time a committee is chosen "to apply to the church for liberty to get materials or timber" from their lands. The plan of the pews and seats in the lower part of the house, was furnished by the Rev. Mr. Haven. On the 7th of June, 1762, the inhabitants assemble to take down the old house. On the 24th, the "sills" of the new were laid, the north sill, according to a previous vote of the Parish, occupying the precise place of that of the old, and on the 21st Sept. next year, 1763, the pews were disposed of according to regulations previously adopted. In this house, much changed since, we are now assembled. Occasionally we meet with one among us whose memory extends back to the time of its erection, seventy-six years ago. One now gone from us, assured me the present season that he distinctly recollected the old house,

which he proceeded in a very clear and intelligible manner to describe.*

The meeting house being finished, an inside clock was presented by Samuel Dexter, Esq. Sen. which remained until replaced, a few years ago, by that now before us.

In 1764 the old New England version of the Psalms, which had been before used, was exchanged for that of Tate and Brady; and two years after it was voted that Mr. Ebenezer Richards "who usually led in singing be desired to sit on the Lord's day, in the seat under the pulpit, commonly called the Elder's seat, and that he have the liberty to nominate a number to sit with him to assist in carrying on the singing." He proceeded to nominate eight persons whose names are given. At this time it was customary for one of the deacons to read the Psalm piecemeal, as it was sung, a custom which continued till 1785, when it was abolished by vote of the Parish. In 1724, at the commencement of Mr. Dexter's ministry, Deacon Wight both read and "tuned" the Psalm, as it was called, but the latter service, I suppose, did not necessarily devolve on him in virtue of his office.

I find no mention of instrumental music as forming part of the services of the Sabbath, before the year 1790, when the Parish vote to "admit an instrument of music into public worship to strengthen the bass," and desire Mr. Abner Ellis to make use of the same. The Bible now used, was presented to the Parish in 1785, by Mrs. Catharina Barnard already mentioned, on condition that the reading of a portion of it should forever, hereafter, be made a part of the religious exercises of the Lord's day, which, it seems, had not hitherto been the custom. The offer was gratefully accepted, and a vote was passed to request the Rev. Mr. Haven to read from time to time such portion as he

* Mr. John Dean, who died Sept. last, at the age of ninety. Two or three circumstances mentioned in my description of the old meeting house, are given on his authority. I have no doubt of his perfect accuracy, from the known retentiveness of his memory, and from the fact that having compared his statement with the various notices of the house contained in the records, I have found, so far as these notices extend, an exact correspondence in the minutest particular.

should judge "most suitable," and "of such length as the several seasons of the year and other circumstances" might render proper.

It is more pleasing to trace improvements, than to note faults and infirmities. The latter, however, as the Records show, existed. Morals were not always pure, and some great indecorum, one would think, must have been observable on the Lord's day, or we should not find, in a warrant for a Parish meeting, an article "to see if the Parish will provide *stocks* or some other means for the punishment of disorderly persons on the Sabbath."

The church administered its discipline for offences, but some alteration in form was, from time to time, required by public sentiment. Until 1771, confession was made by the offending party or parties standing in the broad aisle, and before the whole congregation, and it was not till 1800 that the latter condition was dispensed with.

In 1793, Tate and Brady's Version of the Psalms was exchanged for that of Dr. Watts. This year, also, an important change was made in the mode of admitting persons into the church, and the profession required of them. The latter, as well as the mode of admission in other respects, has been found unexceptionable to the present day. We neither ask nor wish for a covenant, or profession drawn up on more liberal principles. The only article of faith it requires, is that a person believe the christian religion. The teachings of this religion, he is allowed to interpret for himself, and the church authorises no inquiries as to the result. It takes the broad Protestant ground, that the Bible, and the Bible only is the religion of Christians. Each one is there to seek his religion, and to whatever views of doctrine he may arrive, in the serious exercise of the right of private judgment, it belongs not to his fellow beings to condemn him.

The transaction of the church on the occasion alluded to, is too important, and too creditable to all concerned, to be passed over without some further explanation or statement. The act was a deliberate one, and entire harmony prevailed through the whole.

At a meeting of the church, holden the 11th April, 1793, it being "suggested to the church whether it might not be advisable to make some alterations in the modes and terms of admitting persons into the church, and to the enjoyment of christian privileges with them," a committee was chosen to take the subject into consideration, and report at an adjourned meeting, "what they think proper to be done, agreeable to the light of reason and scripture, and the principles of christian liberty." The committee appointed for this purpose were Dea. Isaac Bul-
lard, Timothy Stow, Dea. Joseph Whiting, Samuel Haven, and Aaron Fuller. At an adjourned meeting of the church, May 17th, this committee, says the Record, "Reported the following Form of Christian Union, and Covenant Engagements, to which all shall agree and consent, who become members of the church, viz.

"We profess our belief of the Christian Religion We unite ourselves together for the purpose of obeying the precepts and honoring the institutions of the religion we profess. We covenant and agree with each other, to live together as a band of christian brethren, to give and receive counsel and reproof, with meekness and candor, to submit with a christian temper to the discipline, which the Gospel authorizes the church to administer; and diligently to seek after the will of God, and carefully endeavor to obey all his commands."

"The church," it is added, "very unanimously voted to accept the foregoing as their Form of Christian Union and Covenant Engagements."

According, as it is expressed, to "a very unanimous vote of the church," passed at the same time, a person desirous of becoming a member of the church is to make known his wish to the minister, "who shall mention it in public, a fortnight before the admission of said person. If no solid objection be offered within that term, the person's name shall be entered in the church Book, and said person shall be considered as a member of the church, entitled to all the privileges of the same, and under the obligations of the before mentioned covenant and agreement." If, however, any of the modes of admission heretofore

in use in the church were preferred, the person was at liberty to adopt them.*

Such was the noble example of liberality exhibited by this church more than forty-five years ago,—exhibited without opposition or controversy, when men's understandings were calm, and they could bring to the discussion of the subject unembarrassed minds and an unfettered judgment. The fact shows the prevailing state of sentiment and feeling in this society, at the time, as far removed from exclusiveness, as liberal and catholic, as the most strenuous advocate for rational views and freedom of thought and expression, could desire.

While so much good sense was manifested in concerns more strictly of a religious nature, the temporal interests of the church and society were not neglected. With singular disinterestedness, the annual income of the church property was suffered to remain for a long time untouched, the Parish taxing itself to defray its expenses, at a time too, when its means were comparatively limited, and the pressure of public burdens was severely felt, that the capital might accumulate for the benefit of those who should come after. The consequence was, the funds were augmented, and by the wise forethought, the virtue, and self denial of the Fathers, an ample legacy was left to posterity in perpetuity,—was left unencumbered by any entailed creed or opinion, and wholly unfettered, excepting only, that it must be appropriated to religious uses, to the teaching of christianity on the old spot, and under care and trust of the old, or first church.†

As Mr. Haven approached the evening of his days, his strength gradually declined, and the duties of his office were often discharged under circumstances of pain and suffering. In 1798, five years before his death, the question of a supply of the pulpit at times when he was unable to perform, came up at the annual Parish meeting, and was renewed from year to year, till the fall of 1802, when Mr. Joshua Bates received an invitation

* In the list of admissions into the church during the year subsequent to that in which the above alteration was made, I find the names of Fisher Ames, and Frances, his wife.

† See Note M.

to settle as associate Pastor. The ordination took place the 16th day of March following, and Mr. Haven after a few days of severe sickness, died the 17th of next May, 1803, two months after, in the seventy-first year of his age, and forty-eighth of his ministry.

From a Discourse, preached in this place by his early friend, Dr. Prentiss of Medfield, the second Sunday following his decease, and subsequently published, I am able to collect some information respecting his talents, ministerial character and standing, which, corroborated as it is, by statements derived from other sources, by his published sermons, and the traditions of the place, I have no doubt is correct. He had a clear mind and a perspicuous method; his division of his subject was easy and natural; and his ideas always distinctly expressed, without tedious prolixity or "affected conciseness." He was thus always understood: no one was ever left in doubt about his meaning, and his performances were fitted to produce the precise effect he intended. His thoughts lost nothing of their force by being transmitted through a cloudy or distorting medium. In the choice and treatment of subjects suited to "special occasions," he is described as having been particularly happy. In the general style of his preaching I should suppose him to have been eminently practical, writing with plain good sense, presenting rational views of the doctrines and precepts of christianity, neither perplexing his hearers by metaphysical subtleties, nor bewildering their minds by conducting them into the mazy paths of theological controversy.

In his devotional services he is said to have been ready and apt; in cases of affliction and trial, always meeting the feelings of his hearers and exerting a soothing and elevating influence. To his other qualities he added a gravity of manner and dignified appearance in public becoming the utterance of weighty truths.

In his social character he possessed many of the requisites of a pleasing and instructive companion. His conversation, though not ambitious and showy, was distinguished for good sense and intelligence; he was kind and affable in his deportment; in his manners the grave and familiar seemed to blend in

due proportion, and there was a propriety marked all his actions. His people were sensible of his worth; he enjoyed their confidence, and carried their affections with him to his grave.

During his ministry, Mr. Haven published several sermons, one of which, delivered Feb. 7th, 1796, forty years after his introduction into the ministry in this place, possesses, in addition to its other merits, no slight historical interest. He preached the Dudleian Lecture and Convention Sermon, which I do not find in the list of his printed discourses;* also a half Century Sermon, fifty years after Mr. Dexter delivered his Centennial Discourse, relating principally, as appears from a letter of his to Dr. Belknap, and now on file in the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, to "changes in the inhabitants" of the place, a document which if in existence, would be now curious and valuable.

In approaching the time of my immediate predecessor, I feel that I am treading on delicate ground, and my remarks shall be brief. A few facts, however, it is necessary to state; many they need not be, for I am speaking to you on a subject, to a large portion of you more familiar than to myself. When Dr. Bates was invited to the pastoral office in this church, it was the common impression, I believe, that in his views of christian doctrine he belonged to what was called the moderate, or rational school, and that in his measures and general tone of preaching, he would not appear in the character of an innovator. That such was the expectation here, I learn not only from persons on the spot, but from others, who were intimate with the counsels of the Parish, or of the leading members of it at the time, and many corroborating circumstances might be adduced, if needed. For a little time nothing seems to have occurred to disappoint this expectation. But it ere long became apparent, that the Pastor's views had been misapprehended, or that he had changed his sentiments, or his policy. Of the latter he was accused, and not without some show of reason. Certain it is, that he gradually withdrew from ministerial intercourse and exchanges with a portion of the clergy, whom the people had been accustomed, with

* See Note N.

pleasure, to hear in this place, and who belonged to the liberal party, as it was then termed; while the young gentlemen from a Theological Seminary in a neighboring County, not always as prudent as the Pastor himself, were frequently introduced into the pulpit.

This and other indications, not to be mistaken, of growing exclusiveness, were viewed by a large portion of his people with deep regret. They had too much moderation and christian forbearance to become fomenters of discord, but they believed that they had serious cause of dissatisfaction and complaint. Other circumstances, no doubt, combined to produce, at length, a state of feeling not friendly to a long continuance of peace in the relation of Pastor and people. Such a state of feeling evidently existed, and when Dr. Bates, being chosen President of a College in the State of Vermont, asked a dismissal, the request was granted without hesitation.

The Parish was now divided in sentiment. The majority were opposed to the new Divinity, as it was called, which since the time of Hopkins, had been gaining ground in New England. They had been accustomed, in former days, to a rational, but serious and earnest mode of treating the doctrines and duties of religion, and they could no longer with satisfaction and profit, as they thought, listen to any other. After due trial, as it seemed to them, regarding unanimity in the then existing state of religious opinion, both here and abroad in the community, as hopeless, they resolved to proceed, thinking it reasonable, and consistent with the republican principle, that in cases of an irreconcilable difference of views, the majority and not the minority should govern. But a majority of the church, taking a public vote as evidence, were in opposition. As however the constitution clearly secured to each society, or parish, the right to elect its own minister, against the wishes of a majority of the communicants, if it saw fit to exercise it, and as they could discover no ground in scripture or reason for abstaining from the exercise of such right, the exigencies of the case requiring it, this seeming impediment was surmounted, and the result was, the formation of the existing pastoral relation.

After a portion of the church and society, in the exercise of the common liberty of christians, had withdrawn to enjoy separate worship according to their views of christian doctrine, it is well known that a controversy arose about certain property holden for religious uses, which involved the question, which constituted the first church, that portion of the members of the old church, which had withdrawn, or that which continued to be connected in worship and the administration of ordinances with the Parish. After the case had been argued by able counsel before the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth, at their law term, October 1820, the court decided that the "Church associated and worshipping with the first Parish, is the first Church," and as such it is now known, recognized, and acknowledged in all civil and ecclesiastical acts.*

I here close my narrative.† We have journeyed on through two hundred years, not on the broad and beaten road of history, but in one of its unfrequented by-paths. We have found the way at times, rugged and thorny; this was incident to the nature of the undertaking. If, as a compensation, the eye has been greeted by any green spots, or any sunny aspects, if we have found now and then a sheltered nook where grew a few flowers hitherto uncultured, it is as much as we had a right to expect. The task though to me it has been laborious, and has cost me many fruitless researches, and many regrets for materials, which I could not recover from the gulph which had forever closed over them, has yet been a pleasing one, and has furnished occupation for some sick and sad hours.

But whether pleasant or painful, the survey we have taken, has not, I hope, been without profit. It must have suggested to all of us many reflections which it were well to pursue, and awakened many slumbering trains of thought, which it were wise not soon to let escape from us.

During the period to which our attention has been directed, many changes have been wrought. Change! Change is every where, and time is ever busy in working it. All things are full of vicissitude, as all are full of labor. Man and his works, yea

* See note O.

† See Note P.

the monuments which are raised to protect his ashes, and snatch his name from oblivion, all are wasting, crumbling to dust, and passing away; all are dissolved and mingle with their native elements, to be combined in other forms, to pass through new permutations, and enter into new systems through unending ages.

But why speak of the universality of change, or why attempt to trace it on the unfathomable, shoreless ocean of being? The alterations, which have taken place within two hundred years, and on a single spot, are more than the mind can well grasp. If we go back but a single century, what changes have been witnessed! not on the broad theatre of the world merely, which has assumed an altered aspect; on which objects have shifted their positions, and new characters have appeared, and gigantic passions have been at work, furrowing the earth with revolutions, and causing society to heave from its deepest foundations; not in the condition and resources of our own country, which has risen from Colonial subjection, through stages of unprecedented growth, to liberty and greatness. No. Here have been mighty changes, but with these we have at present no concern. The field of our vision embraces a narrower circle, the objects of which, with their several phases and relations, can be more distinctly seen. Our attention is occupied with what lies in the vicinity of our daily walks, with the history of the Town we inhabit, and the society with which we are united in christian worship.

Another century has gone, and what revolutions are here! Could yonder graves give back their tenants of a hundred years, how few objects would they recognize as familiar! Could they look in upon this assembly, with what surprise would they gaze upon us, and we on them with no less!

You will not expect from me an enumeration of the changes the century has witnessed, and I shall not attempt to portray them. This I leave to your own imaginations. You can better conceive than I can describe, the waste, and growth, and vicissitude, which have marked the spot; what traces time, and industry, and skill have left on the soil; what has silently mouldered, and perished, and disappeared, or yielded to new forms of

life, and freshness, and beauty. The memory of several among you embraces more than half, and of some, three fourths of the term of a century, and you can readily recall evidences of revolution, which to the younger portion of my audience are invisible. You can, with little effort, go back to the time when a generation which has now vanished occupied these seats; when the materials of these edifices had not yet been transported from the forest or the quarry; when modes of thinking, occupations, usages, which are now matters of history, were living and every day realities.

The soil is the same, the hills and the vallies remain, and the calm river at our feet still holds its slow winding way along its green meadows with their groups of islands. But the tide of life in multitudes of bosoms has been stilled. The seasons return, the flowers bloom and fall, and the dews of evening descend as ever, but other eyes gaze upon them, and their influences distil on other hearts. Many hopes, fears, anxieties, disappointments, joys and sorrows have ended. Many designs have been accomplished, and many fair visions have faded.

But on this theme I cannot dwell. I leave it to your own meditations, not doubting that you will derive from it, along with many painful reminiscences, much matter of salutary reflection.

There have been improvements, no doubt, during the century. In all outward accommodations and appliances, in the multiplied sources of physical comfort and enjoyment, unquestionably there has been progress. Whether in intellectual and moral worth we are superior to those who have gone before us, is a question before we attempt to answer which, we should ponder deeply, and pause, and ponder again. In our disposition to eulogize the new, we must not allow ourselves to speak too contemptuously of the old. There have lived before our times men, who were neither dwarfs in intellect, nor puny of heart. Their wisdom, if we may judge from its beautiful results, was not all foolishness, nor their philosophy mere empiricism. And surely, their religion was something better than a narrow superstition. Possibly in the hot bed of modern society, some weeds of luxuriant growth may shoot up, which a deep reverence and study of the

past would help to eradicate. Indiscriminately to admire the old, or the new, is no proof of a sound mind, or of superior discernment. We should cull from both what is good, and cast the bad away, sedulously guarding against self adulation and an extravagant estimate of ourselves, or of our age, as the bane of all improvement.

In the review we have taken, it has appeared, I think, that the community here has been as little subject as any, and less subject than most, to fitful and convulsive movements. It has been generally marked by steadiness of habits. It has been so in its religious character surely. Whatever have been its defects or faults, fickleness, levity, a capricious spirit, and querulousness, are certainly not among them. Of this, a history of the changes, which have been from time to time introduced in connexion with public worship and the christian rites, which have always been accomplished in a peaceful manner, and especially the history of the ministry, afford gratifying evidence. In the relation of pastor and flock, it would not be easy, I presume, to point out an instance, in which entire harmony has more generally prevailed, from the period of the foundation of the church to the present day. Of the six Pastors, who have preceded me, the first five died sustaining the Pastoral relation, and appear to have gone to their rest enjoying the affection, and followed by the united regrets of their people.

I believe, too, from a careful inspection of the records of the place, and such other documents as I could command, as well as from my own experience, that they have enjoyed the average degree of happiness, which falls to the lot of the ministry,—a profession, which, with whatever circumstances of ease it may appear to be attended in the eye of those, who are not aware, or do not reflect, how much more exhausting mental labor proves than bodily,—is in reality accompanied with peculiar anxiety, toil, wear of spirits, and waste of intellectual energies, terminating too frequently in impaired health, pain and languor, if not in premature dissolution. But I forbear. I stand not here to speak of the duties and difficulties of the Pastoral office, or of the many rich sources of consolation and pleasure which it opens.

But time warns me that I must bring my remarks to a close. What remains, but that we endeavor to be faithful to the lessons of the past, that we be patient and tranquil amid all the mutations of earthly things, setting our hope in the God of our Fathers, seeking and using the light he may vouchsafe to impart? Desiring for ourselves freedom of conscience, and liberty to "carry forward the reformation," to assert and enjoy which our Fathers come out to "these goings down of the Sun," let us see that we do not restrain others in the exercise of them. Let us be tolerant of those who differ, honoring sincerity wherever it is found, avoiding illiberality and exclusiveness, as unworthy the disciples of a meek and heaven descended religion.

Truth is the exclusive property of no individual and of no sect. To claim to be the sole possessors of it, is as absurd as to claim a monopoly of the universal light and air. We are not authorised to say to any one, you shall receive it of us, and in such proportion, and on such terms as we choose. Each one is entitled to seek and enjoy it according to his own views of its nature and evidence. Our language to him should be; Enjoy it in peace; we interfere not, nor condemn. Breathe the atmosphere of freedom; follow where you think you see the light, though it lead you aside from the path in which we walk, and we pray God to keep thy steps, and grant us to meet in Heaven.

NOTES.

NOTE A, p. 9.

On this point it is unnecessary to adduce authorities. As matter of curiosity, however, I will give one or two extracts from copies of unpublished Letters, and fragments of Letters, of one of the sufferers, an original settler in this place, which have been put into my hands by Mr. Joseph Metcalf, a descendant of the writer. I believe that there is no doubt of their genuineness. The author, Michael Metcalf, was born according to his own account, in Thetford, in 1586, but at the time of his leaving the "land of his father's sepulchres," was a Dornick weaver in the city of Norwich, to the freedom of which he was admitted in 1618. The following extract, contains his own account of his motives for emigration, with some notice of his voyage.

"For my not bowing at the name of Jesus; and not observing other ceremonies in religion, with other things of the like nature forced upon me, at the instance of Bishop Wren, of Norwich, himself and his chancellor Dr. Corbet, whose violent measures troubled me in the Bishop's court, and returned me unto the high Commissioners court; suffering many times for the cause of religion, I was forced for the sake of the liberty of my conscience, to flee from my wife and children, and go into New England; taking ship for the voyage, at London the 17th of Sept. 1636; being by tempests tossed up and down the seas, till the christmas following, then veering about to Plymouth in Old England; in which time I met with many sore afflictions; leaving the ship I went down to Yarmouth in Norfolk County, whence I shipped myself and family to come to New England; sailed the 15th of April, 1637, and arrived in New England three days before midsummer following, with my wife and nine children, and a servant."

The above is from the fragment of a Letter without date. The following is from a long Letter apparently entire, addressed to "all the true professors of Christ's Gospel within the city of Norwich," and bearing date January 13th, 1636, after his first unsuccessful attempt to cross the Atlantic, and while waiting an opportunity to embark a second time. It is a sort of farewell Epistle, written with great earnestness, much in the style of the Old Puritans, and contains the outpourings of a spirit writhing under a sense of personal wrongs, and mourning over the evils and sins of the times, and the "miseries of Gods' people," which they were suffering from the loss of "faithful ministers," and the "tyranny of wicked men." I have room, however, only for that portion of it which is of a personal nature.

"You are not ignorant, I suppose," says the writer, "of the great trouble I sustained from the Archdeacon's and Bishop's court, at the hands of my enemies concerning the matter of bowing, as well as for other matters of like consequence. I alleged against them the Scripture, the canons, and the Book of common Prayers, but the chancellor replied, he cared for none of them. I further alleged against them the authorities of Archbishops and Bishops, as also their great patron of ceremonies, the learned Hooker (so called by them), together with a Book called the Regiment of the church, allowed by authority, which hath these words, that the decrees and constitutions of the Church of England must not be made a part of God's worship, neither holden necessary to our salvation, as some have vainly taught in some of your hearing; for our Savior saith, "in vain do they worship me, who teach for doctrines the precepts of men."—The Apostle condemneth all voluntary worship devised by men;—Hooker after saith, our church doth not enforce bowing at the name of Jesus upon any man against his conscience. Notwithstanding these and more than these reasons alleged against them, their learned and invincible arguments to refute my assertions were these; "Blockhead, old heretic, the Devil made you, I will send you to the Devil," with such other trim stuff, unfitting times (terms?) to be used by a judge in a court of Judicature, but of these no more, for these words were not spoken in a corner.

My loving friends be not discouraged too much at innovations now forced upon you but never before urged upon any man's conscience, by any Bishop of the See of Norwich since the Reformation, but as the proverb says, new Lords, new laws.

Such doings make sad the hearts of God's people. Let now

faith and patience have their perfect work in these perilous times now come upon you by the sufferance of God; be you chearly; God is on your side, and his truth is your cause, and against you be none but the enemies of the cross of Christ."

In a Postscript, he alludes again to his "his troubles sustained at the hands of Bishop Wren, and Corbet, his chancellor," in consequence of which he was driven from his family, and sometimes, says he, "my wife did hide me in the roof of the house, covering me over with straw."

This Bishop Wren, is said by Lord Clarendon, the court historian, to have been "a man of a severe, sour nature." So passionate and furious were his proceedings, in the Diocese of Norwich, adds the same historian, that "many left the kingdom, to the lessening of the wealthy manufactures there of kerseys, and narrow cloths, and, which was worse, transporting that mystery into foreign parts." History of the Rebellion, pp. 183, 1186. ed. Bost. 1827. See also Neal, History of the Puritans, vol. ii, pp. 298—300. Pierce, in his "Vindication of the Dissenters," says that among the charges exhibited, by a committee of Parliament, against the Bishop, two or three years subsequent to the events above alluded to, one was, that in the two years and four months during which he held the See of Norwich, 3000 of his Majesty's subjects "many of which used trades, spinning, weaving, knitting, and making cloth, stuff, stockings, and other manufactures of wool, some of them setting a hundred poor people at work," transported themselves into Holland, and "other parts beyond the seas," in consequence of his "superstition and tyranny." p. 190. Of these Michael Metcalf seems to have been one.

NOTE B, p. 12.

A conjecture of the Hon. James Savage, the learned and accomplished Editor of Winthrop's Journal, which, though it proves to be unfounded, was a very natural one, as the Records of the Dedham Church had not fallen under his eye, has had the effect of leading astray almost all subsequent writers, who have touched on this point.

In his Appendix to Winthrop's Journal, vol. ii, p. 389, Mr. Savage has inserted Cotton Mather's lists of ministers taken from the Magnalia, supplying the baptismal names, so far as he was able, where Mather had omitted them, and adding other particulars. In Mather's first list of those who were in the *actual exercise* of the ministry when they left England, we find

—— “Phillips of Dedham,” the place of the baptismal name being left blank. This, Mr. Savage has supplied by *Henry*, and adds, “returned to England in 1642.”—Both these additions were conjectural on the part of Mr. Savage, as appears from his note on p. 86, vol. ii of the Journal. Winthrop there speaks of a “Mr. Phillips of Wrentham, in England,” whose return is mentioned among the events of 1642. This, Mr. Savage thinks might have been *Henry*, and adds, that *John* Phillips of Wrentham was one of the Assembly of Westminster Divines. The member of the Dedham church, he further conjectures, might have been either his son or brother.

Now, the member of the Dedham church, I suppose, was neither a son, nor a brother, but this same John himself. Henry Phillips was a member also; but not the person alluded to either by Winthrop or Mather. Henry Phillips’ name is constantly recurring on the Proprietors books, in connexion with grants, purchases, and dividends, down at least to 1657–8. The birth and baptism of several children are recorded at different times, as in 1641, 1643, 1645, 1648, and 1650. He was never a candidate for the ministry here. He is called Henry Phillips for several years, without the *Mr.* prefixed, afterwards uniformly *Ensign* Henry Phillips. He resided some years in Boston, but continued to hold property here, and was engaged in numerous transactions connected with the sale and transfer of lands. These facts show clearly that the Phillips who returned to England in 1641, or 1642, was not Henry Phillips.

I will now proceed to state what I know of Mr John Phillips, from which it will appear, I think, that he is the person to whom Mather and Winthrop allude,—that he, and not Henry, as has been supposed, was the candidate for the ministry here, who “chose to be a candidate in another place,” and who remained unsettled, and in reference to whom the business of gathering the church was for some time delayed.

Mr John Phillips is mentioned four times in the Church Records. I will give the passages entire. The first occurs in the account of the gathering of the church and before the work was completed.

“It is here to be remembered,” says the Record, “that we apprehending the great weight of the work and our great weakness and insufficiency thereto, and finding how slowly we could proceed in these cases with satisfaction to our consciences, we did expect, and much endeavored the guidance of Mr. John Phillips, who came over that summer with some godly company, and had been invited to this plantation by letters formerly. Having therefore hopes from him of obtaining, he was much de-

sired in the first beginning, whereupon he delaying his resolution, we were so delayed in the conclusion of the work, as that the summer passed away in the expectation of his help." This was the summer of 1638.

The next passage occurs soon after, also before the church was gathered.

"Things being thus far cleared up in respect to the company, now eight persons, we spent divers meetings in the more particular conning of divers questions, that concerned the right constitution of a church, of the nature of the covenant, and how far necessary, with other questions of a like nature, whereunto we had the longer time by the delay of Mr. Phillips who being called divers ways, could not speedily resolve, but at length upon weighty reasons concerning the public service of the church, and foundation of the College, he was so far persuaded to attend to the call of Cambridge that we saw no present hopes of him, and so about the beginning of October, came to resolutions to cast ourselves upon the Lord, and venture with such help as he should afford, rather than delay so great and needful a work any longer."

The next extract relates to a period subsequent not only to the gathering of the church, but to the ordination of Mr. Allin, and Ruling Elder Hunting, after having chosen whom the church as it has been seen, declined electing more officers on the ground that better materials might hereafter be had. This, in fact, was the reason why, when so hard pressed to decide between John Hunting and Ralph Wheelock for ruling elder, they did not take both. This was proposed, from tenderness to the feelings of Wheelock, whom, though the majority were for Hunting, the church was for "divers reasons very loath to decline." But the proposition was rejected "chiefly," says the Record, "because the church being yet but meanly gifted for the office, we should deprive ourselves of liberty to take some of more able gifts that God might cast in afterward." They therefore proceed as stated in the text, to ordain the Pastor and one ruling Elder. This, it will be recollected, was the 24th April, 1639. The following extract, it will be perceived, belongs to the next year.

"Mention was made before of the earnest desire of the church to enjoy the help of Mr. Phillips, which they expressed by their invitations with the consent of the whole Town before they joined, and afterwards by a renewed call of the church. But the Lord's time not being come, he was drawn rather to attend the call of other places till the 1st Nov. of the year 1640. But the Lord ordering things so by a special Providence that he no

where settled, but was freed from all engagements; the Lord also disappointing our endeavors of supply other where, when we came to take notice of his liberty from all other places, we found the hearts of all the church desirous to renew the former invitation, which was so suited with many special Providences of God in respect to himself and us, that he saw the Lord's hand clearly in it, and so cheerfully accepted the same, and after his coming to us, and some more acquaintance with the church, he was propounded, with his wife also, the 24th of the 3d mo. 1640, and admitted with much rejoicing of the church, both he and his wife the 31st of the 3d mo. 1640."

The same year, as the Proprietor's Records inform us, he purchases of Joseph Kingsbury three acres of land, bounded on the South by the burial ground and the way leading to it, East by the way leading to Wigwam Pond or Plain, West by land of Mr. John Allin, and North by land of Joseph Kingsbury, being part of the Square on which the meeting house, town house, and Capt. Alden's hotel now stand. The same year he "alienateth and selleth" the same to the church in Dedham forever.

Resuming now the church Record, we find among other memoranda of a miscellaneous character, at the end of the volume, a notice of the departure of Ferdinando Adams, the 3d 6th mo. 1641, he having previously communicated to the church his purpose to "sail unto England and there to remain," and obtained their permission.

Soon after, we find the following: "Likewise our Reverend brother Mr. John Phillips with his wife propounding divers reasons of their intended departure and return to England, for the satisfaction of the church therein, and further advice about the same, the church though divers were unsatisfied in his reasons, yielded consent to his departure, as appears in other notes to that effect, and he took ship 26th 8th month, 1641."

Lechford, in his "Plain Dealing, or Newes from New England," the Preface to which is dated "Clement's Inne, Jan 17, 1641," giving a catalogue of ministers in the Bay, mentions a "Master Phillips out of office" at Dedham, 3, Hist. Coll. iii. 93. This can be no other than the John Phillips above mentioned. There is nothing which would lead to a suspicion that Winthrop referred to any other individual, except a discrepance of one year in the date, as Mr Savage understood him. As I understand him, this seeming discrepance vanishes. Winthrop inserts his account of the disastrous voyage of the ship which bore Mr. Phillips and others, among the transactions of the autumn of 1642, though no dates occur in the account itself inconsistent with the supposi-

tion that the event belonged, in part, at least, to the preceding year. Further, I think the statement requires this supposition.

Mr. Allin's Record gives the autumn of 1641 as the time of Mr. Phillips departure. Winthrop says that they were tossed up and down a December's sea, their provisions being nearly exhausted in consequence of the length of the voyage. Allin says they sailed on the 26th of September. This, so far, harmonizes very well with Winthrop's statement, since there is nothing improbable in the supposition that, at that period, a voyage commenced late in September, might not be completed before the end of December. If Winthrop's account of it was written during the fall, the occurrences of which are related in connexion with it, or any time, in fact, before the latter part of the winter following, it must of necessity refer back to the preceding year, 1641, since, as before observed, it states that the ship was at sea, on her way to England, the passengers being put on allowance in consequence of the failure of provisions, in December—circumstances which could not have been known to him until intelligence was brought by vessels leaving after her arrival. I feel very confident from a careful inspection of the whole passage, that Winthrop is giving the history of a voyage, which was undertaken in the autumn of 1641, but which did not terminate before the latter part of December, or early in January following, and that on receiving information concerning it from his friends in England the next season, he inserted the account in his Journal without particularly specifying dates, any further than to observe incidentally, that those on board were exposed to peculiar suffering being at sea in December, and their provisions nearly exhausted.

But however this account may be disposed of, it is very clear, I think, from the above statement and extracts, that Mr John Phillips, and not Henry Phillips, was the candidate for office in this church and elsewhere, and that he was the Phillips referred to by Mather as having left and returned home. I have very little doubt that he was the same John Phillips to whom Mr. Savage alludes as a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and out of "affection" to whom Deacon Chickering declined for some time taking office. A faint hope of his return may possibly, for a time, have lingered in the breasts of some members of this church.

In regard to the assertion, made, however, not by Mr. Savage, that Henry Phillips became a "*discouraged* and broken hearted christian," I may be permitted to observe, that there is no authority for it in our church records. The expression in the records, used in reference to his admission into the church,

is, "he appeared to the church a *tender* and broken hearted christian," the phrase "broken hearted" being evidently used in the scriptural sense, as in Psalm LI, 17,—"*The sacrifices of God are a broken heart, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*" The opposite expression was sometimes used. A case occurs in point, in a quotation I have given from Mr. Adams' Fast Sermon, p. 38. Thus he speaks of persons remaining "heart whole," referring to their impenitence and pride.

NOTE C, p. 14.

The Covenant of this church I suppose, may be taken as a fair specimen of the Covenants of the early New England churches, which were not in general *creed* Covenants, but related solely to practice. Such certainly is the character of that adopted here in 1638, which is in the words following.

"We whose names are subscribed, having found by woful experience, the unstedfastness of our hearts with God, and proneness to go astray from his ways (for which we desire to abase and humble ourselves in his presence) and desiring to be joined forever to the Lord, and to cleave together in spiritual love and communion, according to his holy institutions, that we might enjoy in his name such holy helps as the Lord Jesus in wisdom and compassion hath ordained in his gospel for his people, thereby to let out himself unto them, and to build them up in faith and holiness, till he have prepared them for everlasting communion with himself.

"We do therefore, in the name and presence of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and before his people here assembled, solemnly enter into covenant with the Lord our God, professing and acknowledging the Lord Jesus, our blessed Redeemer, to be the only priest, prophet, and king of his church, and (through the help of his grace) his only merit we rest upon for our pardon and peace with the Father, his only teaching and righteous government, with all the blessed ordinances of his kingdom; we do embrace and submit unto all things, as the only rule of our lives; renouncing all our own righteousness, with all the doctrines, devices, and commandments of men, not agreeing with his holy word; especially all the superstitious and tyrannous commands of Antichrist, and his adherents, wherein we have in any kind been entangled; professing and promising (through the help of his rich grace) henceforth not to live unto ourselves, but unto the Lord Jesus,

who hath bought us with his blood, avoiding carefully all such things as be offensive to his Majesty, and dishonorable to our profession of his name, with all such dangerous temptations as our sinful hearts are wont to be drawn aside withal, in special, the inordinate cares of, and entanglements in, the affairs of this life: promising and professing also through the help of the Lord, to live together in this our holy fellowship, according to the rule of love, in all holy watchfulness over each other, and faithful mutual helpfulness in the ways of God, for the spiritual and temporal comfort and good of one another in the Lord; and all to the setting forth of the praise of his rich grace in Christ, who hath called us, in his abundant mercy, to this holy fellowship with his Majesty, and one with another."

On the 23d of May, 1683, during the ministry of Mr. Adams, as appears from the Appendix to Mr. Dexter's Sermon, (for the Records of the period are lost), the church renewed its Covenant in the same words, adding at the end some paragraphs relating particularly to the sins of the times. As these additions are of little importance in themselves, and the insertion of them would occupy more space than can well be spared, I shall not be censured, I trust, for their omission. I will only observe, that among the sins enumerated, and the catalogue of which must sound somewhat strangely in the ears of those who are accustomed to attribute a remarkable degree of purity to the days of our fathers, are "neglect or profanation of the worship and institutions of Christ, sabbath breaking, vain and sinful company keeping, misspending of time, excessive drinking, wanton and loose behavior, failing in truth, uncharitable and unrighteous censuring, sinful tale bearing, corrupt communication, pride, covetousness, and the like." This it will be recollected was in 1683. Mr. Adams' Sermons, which relate to nearly the same period, present, as we have seen, a similar picture. What worse could be said of modern degeneracy?

In 1742, during Mr. Dexter's ministry the covenant was again renewed, the original form being recited, with the additions above alluded to. "About the year 1767," as Mr. Haven informs us, in a note to his Sermon preached forty years after his ordination, a substitute was adopted, "more concise, and expressed in more general terms." The transaction, however, is not alluded to in the church records. No other alteration in the Covenant was made till 1793, when the form now in use was adopted. For this, see p. 65.

NOTE D. p. 20.

Winthrop in his *Addenda*, (ii, 342,) mentions a "John Allen, of Surslingham, a minister in Norfolk," who, in 1635, or about that time, sent over to the Treasury of the Colony twenty five pounds, by Thomas Fisher, of Winton. This I suspect to have been Mr. Allin afterwards pastor of Dedham. Thomas Fisher, it will be recollected, was admitted a member at Dedham, along with Mr. Allin, though there is no evidence that he came over at the same time. Michael Metcalf, mentioned in a former note, was another of Mr. Allin's company, and he, as we have seen was from Norwich. Surslingham belonged to the same Diocese. Now among the ministers of that Diocese silenced by Bishop Wren in 1636 or 1637, Neal, (*Hist. Puritans*, ii, 300, ed. Bost. 1817,) mentions a Mr. John Allen. Probably he and Metcalf came in the same ship, for they both arrived in the summer of 1637. These circumstances put together lead me to suspect that the Mr. John Allen of Surslingham, mentioned by Winthrop, and the individual of the same name silenced by Bishop Wren, and the Pastor of Dedham were the same. From affection or respect for him, or previous acquaintance with him personally, or by reputation, Fisher or the Fishers, (for there were three of them, John, Thomas, and Anthony, admitted at the same time,) and others probably, may have been induced to select this spot as the place of their future residence. Thomas Fisher undertook the building of the meeting house, but died before it was finished. Both he, and Anthony Fisher originally took lots adjoining Mr. Allin's, that of the former bounding Mr. Allin's on the South, and that of the latter on the North. John also had a lot in the vicinity, but he died early.

Joshua Fisher, who, as has been already observed, died in 1672, was also here early, though not admitted into the church before 1648. Daniel Fisher alluded to, on page 29, as an ancestor of Fisher Ames, but whose name was inadvertently omitted in a notice of the death of some of Mr. Allin's cotemporaries in the foot note on the same page, was admitted several years earlier, that is, previously to the 24th of April, 1639. He died in 1683. Anthony Fisher received into the church in 1645, died in 1669. Michael Metcalf admitted in 1639, died in 1664. His name stands first on the Committee chosen to "contrive the fabricke of a meeting house." His associates were John Luson, Anthony Fisher, and Joseph Kingsbury.—Edward Alleyn died at Boston in 1642.

NOTE E. p. 23.

A copy of the original edition is found in the American Antiquarian Society, at Worcester, bearing the following title. "A Defence of the Answer made unto the Nine Questions, or Positions, sent from New England against the Reply of that Reverend Servant of Christ, Mr. John Ball; entitled Tryall of the New Church Way in New England, and in Old. Wherein besides a more full opening of Sundry Particulars concerning Liturgies, Power of the Keys, Matter of the Visible Church &c. is more largely handled that controversy concerning the Catholic Visible Church, tending to clear up the Old Way of Christ in New England Churches.

By John Allin, } Pastor of { Dedham } in N. E.
 Tho. Shepard, } Cambridge. }

Lon. 1648."

By an error of the press the Preface bears the signature of Tho. Allin and Tho. Shepard. (Thomas Allin was minister of Charlestown.) The same error occurs in the edition of 1653. But this, I am convinced by a careful collation of a copy of the two editions is not a reprint, but a part of the former edition, garnished with a false title page, which reads as follows,—“A Treatise of Liturgies, Power of the Keys, and Matter of the Visible Church. In answer of the Rev. Servant of Christ Mr. John Ball, by Thomas Shepard, sometimes Fellow of Harvard College in Cambridge, and late Pastor of Cambridge in New England. Lon. 1653.” Here, it will be observed, the name of Allin is wholly omitted, though, as before said, that of Tho. Allin and Tho. Shepard stand after the Preface. That this is an error of the press, however, very readily accounted for by the circumstance that the work was printed in a foreign country, and the proof sheets therefore could not be submitted to the inspection of the authors, is abundantly evident. No one who reads the Preface with ordinary attention can for a moment doubt that it was written by the authors of the Defence. It contains in itself proof incontestable on this point. The following are some of the notices of the book, and of the writers with which I have incidentally met in my researches.

That Mr. Allin whose name stands first on the title page of the original edition, had a principal share in its composition has never been questioned. Cotton Mather, once indeed, speaks of the Defence as Shepard's, expressing himself in a loose way, his purpose not particularly requiring precision of language. In his life of Mr. Allin of Dedham, however, he affirms that he wrote it “with Mr. Shepard of Cambridge,” and John Cotton couples

both names in a complimentary allusion to the work in his Latin Preface to Norton's Reply to Apollonius. Dr. Eliot, in his Biographical Dictionary gives the reference incorrectly, to the "Preface to Norton's Sermon." The whole passage with the exception of two or three unimportant words, is given by Mather, vol. i, p. 417. The Preface of Allin and Shepard was in part republished in a small collection of Tracts relating to the early history of New England, printed in Boston in 1696, under the title of "Massachusetts, or the First Planters of New England, the End and Manner of their coming thither, and Abode there, &c." It is there called the "Preface of the Rev. Mr. John Allin of Dedham and Mr. Thomas Shepard of Cambridge in New England before their Defence of the Answer made unto the Nine Questions."

In a Tract published in Boston in 1693, entitled "The Judgment of several Eminent Divines of the Congregational Way concerning a Pastor's Power occasionally to exert Ministerial Acts in another Church, besides that which is his own particular Flock," to which is prefixed a commendatory notice by James Allen, Samuel Willard, Michael Wigglesworth, Cotton Mather, and Nehemiah Walter, the author among other authorities he adduces, appeals to "Mr. Thomas Shepard, the first Pastor at Cambridge in N. E. and Mr. John Allin, Pastor of the Church at Dedham, in their Defence of the Nine Positions (printed in the year 1648) in Answer to Mr. Ball." In this Treatise, he says, they "acknowledge that though a minister has not such power in another church as he has over them that are his proper flock, nevertheless that he may charitably put forth an act of his office to those in another church of whom he is no officer, p. 132, 135; and again p. 134, in answer to that question, whether a minister may administer the seals in another congregation, their words are, 'we will not deny but that occasionally being called thereunto by the desire of the church he may lawfully do the same.' This was the judgment of Mr. Shepard of Cambridge, and Mr. Allin of Dedham, both of them famous in New England"—pp. 10, 11. This power of a Pastor was early denied by many in New England.

The work was appealed to as illustrating the views and opinions of the early Planters on other subjects. Thomas Shepard of Charlestown, in his Election Sermon, refers to it as written by "Mr. Allin of Dedham with" says he, "my honored Father," and adduces its authority to prove that the original emigrants came not out as separatists, but "for progress in the work of Reformation," as had been said by many others.

I mentioned, in a former part of this note, a slight inaccuracy in a reference made by Dr. Eliot in his article on Mr. Allin. The Biographer has also misapprehended the remark of Cotton Mather in relation to Mr. Allin's Epitaph. Mather says that the lines

“ Vir sincerus, Amans pacis, patiensque Laborum,
Perspicuus, Simplex, Doctrinæ purus Amator.”

originally applied to Philippus Gallus, might be made the epitaph of John Allin. Eliot quotes them as actually Allin's epitaph. There are some other errors, or marks of haste in Eliot's article. Near its commencement 1737 is put for 1637. This of course must have been an error of the press.

NOTE F. p. 29.

The following will serve as a specimen of these Grants, and of the motives which led to them.

“ Whereas Mr. John Allin the new pastor of our congregation hath for much time past taken great pains both in exercising his gifts amongst us: and careful in attending his said office since it pleased the Lord to call him thereunto; As also hath been at much expense in his diligent and faithful practice for the good both of Church and commonwealth amongst us the whole time he hath been with us; which we acknowledge we are bound to shewe ourselves thankful for by taking care for that convenient means of employment, and improvement of his stock for his more comfortable subsistence in the aforesaid office whereunto he is so called; In which respect we do now grant unto the said Mr. John Allin our present Pastor and to his assigns forever Thirty acres of meadow lying beyond the Rocks Westwards: to begin at the North corner of the said meadow and so on both sides of the brook to measure the said meadow Southwards unto the portion of 30 acres complete. Also we do grant unto Mr. John Allin our said Pastor and to his assigns forever One hundred and twenty acres of upland next adjoining unto the said Meadow as may be most convenient to be annexed unto the same: And to be measured out in time convenient accordingly as he shall require the same to be done. And also for his more peaceable and comfortable subsistence in the before said office we do further grant that the said meadow and upland shall be free from payment of all charges in or concerning our towne during the time the said Mr. John Allin shall remain in office amongst us and employ the same himself or by some other to his use and no longer.” Fol. i. p. 40.

This was in 1639. The same year Mr. Allin purchased the twelve acre lot, and house upon it, of Nicholas Phillips. On this lot the Jail and House of Correction, and the house now occupied by Samuel Swett, Esq, at present stand. It extended through from Charles River to the burial ground on the South, a part of it extending beyond it on the West, to the meadow, the Eastern boundary being the lot of Joseph Kingsbury, the dividing line between them running a little south of the centre of the street, (which might with propriety be called Allen street,) now leading from High street back of the meeting house, and by the Town house, to the burial ground. High street passed through it, and on the West lay the lot of Lambert Genere. Mr. Allin's original house lot, which he the next year sold, lay West of this, as did most of his estates, though not all, for he at one time owned a part of the Mill on Mother Brook and some upland about it, which, in 1650, he sold to Nathaniel Whiting. His original house lot together with the lots of Thomas and Anthony Fisher, Thomas Wight, and some others, lay, as it appears, in and about what now constitutes the upper village, "for wood and timber running in among the rocks westward." There was at that time a place called "Ragged Plain," lying in a westerly direction, as any one will be convinced, who carefully studies the Book of Grants and Aliens. The road to it lay through, or along side of several of the lots above alluded to. What is now known as "Ragged Plain," (on the Canton road) was not the original one, or there were two places so designated.

The order of the General Court, Oct. 17th, 1649, requesting the Treasurer to pay to "Mr. John Allen" 130*l.* as satisfaction for 100*l.* advanced to defray the expenses of Mr. Ed. Winslow's mission, as it now appears, referred not, as has been supposed, to the Rev. John Allin of Dedham, but to a Capt. John Allen, who had rendered the Colony this, or some other services. On examination of the Records of the Court I received the impression, as did Mr. Haven, who examined them before me, (Centennial Address, p. 63,) that Mr. Allin of Dedham was the person intended. This was quite natural. As Mr. John Allin of Dedham was mentioned in a preceding grant, (1643,) and again in a subsequent part of the Record, (1653,) the obvious inference was that "Mr. John Allen," referred to in the order of 1649, was the same individual. But on looking over the recently published volume, (vol. vii, 3d Series,) of the Mass. Historical Collections, I find in some documents relating to D'Aulney and La Tour, taken from the "Archives of Massachusetts," a John Allen repeatedly mentioned, who in the concluding document is called "Capt. John Allen," and some circumstances are added,

which show clearly that the Mr. Allen mentioned in the order of 1649 in connexion with the loan, was not Mr. Allin of Dedham, but the Captain aforesaid, who is a new personage in history. The document is signed by William Torrey, Clerk, and Ed. Rawson, Secretary, and bears date 27. 8. 1668. The following is an extract. "The Deputies understanding by good information that Capt. John Allen hath several times been employed by order from this Court, viz. ten days to look after a French ship upon the coast, as also a voyage to Monsieur D'Aulney, both himself and ship, for the space of near twenty days, besides a second voyage to the aforesaid D'Aulney, wherein he was absent six weeks; to which may be added, his lending Mr. Winslow for his country's use, 100*l.* in England, which was not paid in seven years after, and then but in country pay, all which considered the Deputies judge meet," &c. "to grant him a thousand acres of land where he can find it according to law, so as he take it not up in above two places." 3 Hist. Coll. vii, pp. 120, 121. Mr. Allin of Dedham always wrote his name Allin, and not Allen, but nothing is to be inferred from this circumstance, as the orthography of the day was not uniform.

The Bogestow, or Bogastow, alluded to in the grant to the Rev. John Allin as lying on Charles river, is a well known place, now, as I have said, included within the limits of Medway. Dr. Morse, in his Geography and Gazateer says, I know not on what authority, that the Indian name of Charles River was *Quinobequin*.

NOTE G. p. 35.

A similar project had been previously before the Town, a law of 1654 making it the duty of Towns to provide houses for their ministers. In 1668, during Mr. Allin's ministry, it was voted at a general meeting of the Town, to build "a convenient dwelling house on the lot called the church lot," and to plant and enclose an orchard there. At the next meeting, 18th 12 mo. 1669, objections being urged, on account of the "public charges," and a debt which is specified, a proposition was made to dispose of some of the public lands lying near the Dorchester line, in order to build a house in the "place aforesaid," from 40 to 50 feet long, and from 18 to 20 wide, 13 feet "between joints, double floors, with windows, and all the building sufficient for strength and convenience." Here, I believe, the affair ended for that time. Some time after Mr. Adams' settlement, the Town vote that a frame be "forthwith" prepared for him at the

Town charge, and the business is committed to the select men for execution; but upon consultation with Mr. Adams, it is thought best to defer it "some time longer;" mean time Mr. Adams might contrive to "set up the frame to content of all, or may be provided some other way." Nothing more was done till his death. An attempt was afterwards made to purchase Mr. Allin's houses and lands, but difficulties presenting themselves, the project seems to have been finally abandoned.

NOTE H, p. 40.

This vote is very carefully recorded at length both in the Town Record, and in the Deacon's Book. Other instances of a similar kind near the same period may be adduced which go to show that the right of the church, technically so called, to precede the people in the election of a minister was then contested and sometimes with success. The case of Salem, when Mr. Nichollet was chosen to the office of Pastor, is one. Another instance occurred in Charlestown in 1697. Referring to this case, the Rev. H. Ware, Jr. remarks, in a note to his Century Sermon delivered in 1821, after mentioning a vote passed by the Old North church in Boston relative to it, "I have noticed this vote particularly, because it is sometimes attempted to make us believe, that the choice of ministers by the people, instead of the church, is a modern innovation, opposed to the uniform usage in times past. Here is an example to the contrary of as long ago as one hundred and twenty-four years; and the example and opinion of the church in Charlestown is as valuable in settling the question of *usage* as those of any other church. This satisfies us that usage is not invariable, and that the principle so far from being settled was actually contested from the first." Accordingly Cotton Mather acknowledges, "many people would not allow the church any privilege to go before them in the choice of a Pastor." *Ratio Disciplinæ* p. 16. According to the same author, the church, though compelled to yield, sometimes resorted to a sort of artifice to cover its defeat, electing three or four persons, so that on whichever of them the choice of the people might fall, it might still be said, "The church has chosen him." *ib.* p. 17. He complains of the disposition of the people to "supersede" the law, and "overrule it," as it then stood. Their argument against allowing the church to precede them in the choice of a minister was, "*We must maintain him.*" *ib.* p. 16.

The case here preceded that of Charlestown by some years. Nor was it the only one which occurred here, for two years af-

ter, in giving a call to Mr. Pierpont, the people took the lead, and the vote of the church followed. The General Court about this period passed a law giving to Towns and Parishes the exclusive right to elect their ministers, and though this law did not long continue in force, its passage viewed in connexion with examples of the kind just alluded to, (and Brattle Street was another instance; how many more exist I cannot tell; it is not probable that they were solitary instances,) furnishes a sufficient indication of the struggle which was then going on, in which we may detect the old spirit of liberty jealous of every encroachment on popular rights. Of course, as the number of communicants, in progress of time, became less in proportion to the congregation, or people, the latter would with the more reluctance submit to be controlled in their choice of a minister by the church, especially as they must provide for his maintenance when settled, and his ministrations were to be for the common benefit. The result of the struggle might be foreseen. It appeared in the Constitution of 1780.

NOTE I. p. 41.

To the name of Samuel Lee a more than ordinary interest attaches. He is described as possessing "a strong and brilliant imagination," and as being "extensively learned." "Hardly ever a more universally learned person," says Cotton Mather, "trode the American strand." "Live, O rare Lee, live," exclaims the same writer, "if not in *our* works, yet in *thy own*." Of his learning, however, we have more unequivocal testimony than the rhapsodies of Cotton Mather. His books though now little known, enjoyed a high reputation at the time. One of them, "The Triumph of Mercy in the Chariot of Praise," as Eliot, in his Biographical Dictionary informs us, was much read in New England. The author, however, according to the same authority, was haughty, overbearing, and eccentric, disgusting by his extravagance those who viewed his talents with admiration, and read his productions with delight.

He was the son of a wealthy London merchant; was educated at Oxford; became fellow of Wadham College, and Proctor of the University; afterwards went to London, where he had the living of Bishops-Gate church, conferred by Cromwell, but was silenced by the Act of Uniformity in 1662. "He was," says Calamy (Continuation of Account of Ejected Ministers, p. 53, et seqq.) "a considerable general scholar, understood the learned languages well, spoke Latin fluently and elegantly, was

well versed in all the liberal arts and sciences, was a great master in Physic and Alchymy, and no stranger to any part of polite and useful learning." He came to this country in 1636. Eliot says that "two reasons were assigned for his leaving his country, one that he was afraid of the growth of popery. Another, that he was invited to be president of Harvard College." The Dedham Plantation was then in its most depressed state. That he should not have accepted its call is not surprising.

In 1687, he became Pastor of a church in Bristol, R. I. But he was not pleased with his residence in New England, and after intelligence of the Revolution of 1688 arrived, he became impatient to leave. He remained, however, till 1691, when in his haste to depart, "he with great hazard," says Calamy, "travelled to Boston, with his wife and family, and in the midst of winter, set sail for Old England." Yet, withal, he was a "timorous" man, and somewhat superstitious too, and dreaded above all things death in captivity or a prison. He had dipped deeply into astrology, which he durst not approve, and once burned nearly a hundred volumes which taught the art, yet he could not banish from his mind the ideas with which a study of it had rendered him familiar, nor, with all the efforts of the reasoning faculty, succeed in divesting his imagination of a lingering reverence for predictions founded upon it. A few nights before he sailed, he told his wife that he had "viewed a star which according to the rules of astrology presaged captivity." Alarmed at this, he persuaded the captain to delay sailing for a few days, without however letting him know the reason he had for desiring him to wait. At length, however, he pursued his voyage, but encountered violent winds, and the ship being driven on the coast of Ireland, was attacked by a French privateer, and after strenuous resistance for some hours, was taken, and carried as a prize to St. Maloe, in France. Here his family was separated from him and sent home. Left alone in a strange country, he soon fell sick, and died "in possession," says the author just referred to, "of those very enemies whom all his days he had most dreaded" Neal, Hist. New England, p. 419, says he died in prison, and adds that his "timorous spirit," in consequence of which he was so possessed with a fear of the return of Popish cruelties that he fled from England, "put him upon those measures that brought him to the end he always feared." He found a heretic's grave, being denied burial within the city. See also Wood, Athen. Oxon.

Jonathan Pierpont also mentioned on page 41, was from Roxbury, graduated at Harvard College, 1685, ordained at Reading, June 23, 1689, died June 2, 1709, at the age of 44. John

Rogers was the son of President Rogers, and was ordained at Ipswich, in 1692, and died Dec. 28th, 1745, in the 80th year of his age. See Mss. additions to Harv. Coll. Catalogue in the Historical Library. Nathaniel Clap was the son of Nathaniel Clap of Dorchester, and was settled at Newport, and died Oct. 30, 1745, at the age of 78. See Callender's Century Discourse; also 1 Hist. Coll. ix, 184, x, 170.

NOTE K. p. 46.

Of Mr. Belcher's printed Sermon's I have met with the following, which are probably all which he published.

1. "The Worst Enemy Conquered. A brief Discourse on the Methods and Motives to pursue a victory over those Habits of Sin which war against the Soul. Delivered on June 6, 1698. The day for the Election of Officers in the Artillery Company, at Boston. By Joseph Belcher, Pastor of the church in Dedham. Boston in N. E. 1698." The Preface is by Cotton Mather.

2. "The Singular Happiness of such Heads and Rulers as are able to choose out their People's Way, and will also Endeavor their People's comfort. As it was discoursed in a brief sermon, Preached to the Great and General Assembly of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, convened at Boston, in N. E. on May 28, 1701. The stated day for the Anniversary Election of Counsellors. By Mr. Joseph Belcher, Pastor of the Church in Dedham. Boston 1701." Preface by Samuel Torrey of Weymouth.

3. "Two Sermons Preached in Dedham, N. E. The First on a day set apart for Prayer with Fasting, to Implore Spiritual Blessings on the Rising Generation. The other (some time after) in Private to a considerable number of Young Persons, in the aforesaid Town, and at the earnest desire of several of the hearers. Published by Joseph Belcher, M. A.—Boston 1710." These are written in an exceedingly plain, not to say homely style, and no particular care appears to have been bestowed on their composition.

4. "God Giveth the Increase, an Ordination Sermon, Preached at Bristol, N. E. August 30, 1721, when Mr. Nathaniel Cotton was ordained the Pastor of the Church there. By Joseph Belcher, Pastor of the Church in Dedham.—Boston 1722."—Preface by Dr. Increase Mather.

A well executed Portrait of Mr. Belcher was in possession of Mrs. Lucy Gay, wife of Dea. Ichabod Gay of the West Parish,

at the time of her death. Mrs. Gay was daughter of Col. Joseph Richards, and grand daughter of the Rev. Mr. Belcher. Dea. Gay left one son, the late Capt. William Gay, to whom the portrait descended; and by whose widow, Elizabeth Gay, it has been preserved. I take pleasure in being able to add the following communication from her, recently received through the agency of the Hon. William Ellis, to whom for this, and other services by which I have been aided in my inquiries, I am happy to acknowledge my obligation.

“To the Rev. Alvan Lamson, D. D. Pastor of the First Church of Dedham,

“SIR,—In behalf of myself and family, I hereby present through you, to the First Church of Dedham, the Portrait of the Rev Joseph Belcher, formerly Pastor of said Church, on condition that this Relic of Antiquity be put in order, and preserved in some suitable place, under the care and direction of the said first Church of Dedham. ELIZABETH GAY.

Dedham, January 1st, 1839.”

Though, since the reception of this note, I have not had opportunity of communicating it to the Church, I hazard nothing in saying that the Portrait will be gratefully accepted, and that due care will be taken for its preservation.

NOTE L, p. 51.

She was Catharina Mears, the daughter of Mr. Samuel Mears, who kept the public house near the Roxbury line, long and familiarly known as the “George Tavern,” and which was burned July 31st, 1775. Her mother was Maria Catharine Smith, and one of her ancestors held a commission in Cromwell’s army. She was a member of the Roxbury church. She died as already stated in 1797, at the age of 95. A tender and beautiful tribute to her memory, written in all the fulness of filial affection, by her son the Hon. Samuel Dexter, Sen. appeared in a newspaper then published in Dedham. It is, however, too long for insertion.

The Rev. Mr. Dexter has recorded in his Journal the birth of eleven children, seven sons and four daughters. One of the sons, the Hon. S. Dexter, Sen. already mentioned, is well remembered here. It was the wish of his father to educate him for the ministry, and for this purpose he fitted him for College, but the theology of the day being abhorrent alike to his understanding and his feelings, the design was abandoned. He engaged in the mercantile profession, and having, at the age of 36,

acquired property sufficient to satisfy his moderate desires, he relinquished business, and came, in 1662, to reside in his native town, where he remained till after the commencement of the Revolutionary war. He then retired to Woodstock, in Connecticut, and returned to Dedham after the close of the war. Not long after the death of his wife, in 1784, he sold his place to Dr. John Sprague, and went to Marlborough, thence to Weston, and in 1800, to Mendon, where he died in 1810, in the 85th year of his age, bequeathing in his will five thousand dollars to found a professorship for promoting the study of Biblical Criticism in Harvard University.

Of the numerous marks of respect he received from the public, of the trusts reposed in him, and the responsible offices he was at different times, called to fill, it does not fall within the design of my present remarks to speak. It is pleasing to dwell on his merits of a humbler kind, to witness him as a citizen of the place, taking an interest in all its affairs, civil and religious, engaged on all important committees, for several years serving as clerk of the Town and Parish, the records of which, during his residence here, furnish ample testimony to his discretion, activity, high standing, and influence.

Mr. Dexter had a taste for theological reading, which he liberally indulged, but in his views he continued to the end of life to dissent from what he regarded as the austere doctrines of the Genevan school. He was eminent for piety and talents; he was a man of scrupulous integrity, exact and methodical in all his habits.

He married Hannah Sigourney, daughter of Mr. Andrew Sigourney, who was one of the company of French Protestants, or Huguenots, who emigrating soon after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, settled at Oxford, in Worcester county, but who being soon after attacked by the Indians, fled to Boston. He was the father of the late Hon. Samuel Dexter.

For the use of the Rev. Samuel Dexter's Diary, I am indebted to the Misses Clap, of Dorchester, whose father Capt. Lemuel Clap, married one of his daughters, and to Mrs. Palmer, late of Needham, and daughter of the late Rev. Jason Haven of this place, who also married a daughter of Mr. Dexter. To Mrs. Palmer I am also indebted for other aid. The Journal contains some allusions to the eminent Divines of the early part of the last century, but I find nothing respecting them worth extracting. The following is the only incident I will quote. It is given under date of Feb. 21, 1723, when Mr. Dexter was a candidate for the ministry. "Visited old Dr. M. at Boston, and received his dying blessing. I begged his blessing. He replied, the Lord

be with you and bless you, and make your labors more successful than mine." This could be no other than Dr. Increase Mather, who died the 23d of August following, a disappointed and melancholy old man.

NOTE M, p. 66.

A few remarks on the origin and history of these funds, and the conditions on which they are holden, may not be out of place here. As early as 1638, one acre of ground, on which the meeting house now stands, "abutting on High street towards the North," was obtained by the Town, in exchange, of Joseph Kingsbury, for the purpose of erecting a meeting house upon it, after it was determined not to place it on the spot originally reserved for it. In 1641, three years after, as the Proprietor's records informs us, "Mr. John Phillips alienateth and selleth to the Church three acres," being another part of the same lot, which had been sold to him by Kingsbury the preceding year, having the burial ground on the South. The same year, 1641, said Kingsbury, upon a certain consideration, grants to the church the remaining three acres lying between the parcel last named and the acre before relinquished for the meeting house. In this way the church came into possession of the whole square. After this, grants or donations in land or money were, from time to time, made by the Proprietors or by individuals, the purpose being sometimes specified, as "for the use and accommodation of a teaching church officer," at other times not, it being thought unnecessary probably, as it would be naturally inferred that property granted to a church, was intended to be bestowed for religious uses, of which the support of public worship would be regarded as the principal. No more specific condition or limitation than that above mentioned, occurs in any of the grants; no other trust or use is named. There is no reference whatever to the theological sentiments of the Teacher, or the doctrines he is to explain or inculcate. In this respect the funds are, as I have already observed, wholly unfettered, a circumstance to which I am desirous of calling the attention of my readers, as I have reason to believe that the subject has been misapprehended by some who are unacquainted with the facts in the case.

There is no evidence that the donors intended to throw any impediment in the way of entire freedom of thought in those who should come after. Had they designed to leave posterity the liberty which they themselves enjoyed, and which they prized so

highly, of forming their own opinions on all subjects pertaining to religion, availing themselves of whatever further light might break forth from God's word, I see not how they could have proceeded otherwise than they did, for it is impossible that grants for a religious use, should be conveyed in more general and comprehensive terms.

What portion of the lands thus acquired, were occupied by the minister, or what part of the proceeds of them was appropriated to his maintenance before the time of Mr. Dexter, we have no means of ascertaining. He, it will be recollected, had the use of all the lands "commonly known by the name of Parsonage." How much this included at that time, is not very clear. When Mr. Haven was settled, the church, as already stated, grants him the use of its land about the meeting house, and three meadows and one pasture, which are specified, in addition.

In regard to the early management of the church property, I find no very satisfactory information. The Town, or the select men of the same, appear for some years to have had the custody of it, the affairs of the church and Town being here as elsewhere, at that period, intimately blended. In 1668, the Town chooses a committee on the subject of making some improvement on the Church Meadows, and renting the same. The committee rent them to Lieut. Joshua Fisher for three years, and engage to make him the offer of them for a further term, provided the church have no "occasion for them to supply the use of the ministry before." It is added, "the select men do allow of and confirm the above written covenant." Again, in 1673, we have an account of the renting of the Church Meadows for one year, one of them for "three loads of hay to be paid for the use of Mr. Adams," then minister. This, too, was an act of the select men. In 1668, the Town, as has been seen, was engaged in discussing the question of planting an orchard and making other improvements in what was called the Church lot. As early as 1686, however, we find that the Deacons had the care of the lands and the proceeds of them. More than half a century afterwards, 1754, a law was passed constituting the Deacons of churches a corporation for holding and managing property subject to the direction of the church. Before the passage of this law, as appears from the Deacon's Books, (pp. 124 et seqq.) the church had money to a certain amount at interest, loaned by the Deacons in trust for the benefit of the church.

It was not, as before stated, till after the close of the revolutionary war, that an act of the church is recorded appropriating its annual income for the payment in part of the ministers salary. This appropriation was afterwards frequently omitted in order

still further to augment the funds, but it has now, for many years, been regularly made.

The property belongs to the first, or old church, to be managed by its Deacons, whom the law creates a corporation for this and similar purposes, and who are to hold the same in trust, to be employed by them, under superintendence of the church, for the support of public worship for the general good of the inhabitants of the Parish.

NOTE N, p. 63.

The following is a list of Mr. Haven's printed Sermons.—Thanksgiving Sermon, Nov. 21, 1758—Artillery Election Sermon, June 1, 1761—Sermon at Framingham, 1761—at Ordination of Rev. Edward Brooks, at North Yarmouth, 1764—at the General Election, 1769—on the death of Hannah Richards, 1770—at Ordination of Ephraim Ward, Brookfield, 1771—of Moses Everett, Dorchester, 1774—at Funeral of Rev. Samuel Dunbar, 1783—at Ordination of Rev. S. Palmer, Needham, 1792—Sermon preached forty years after his ordination.

The Rev. Jason Haven was born in Framingham, where his father was Deacon, March 2d, 1773, O. S.—was graduated at Harvard University, 1754, and in Nov. 1756, married Catharine Dexter, daughter of his immediate predecessor. He was a member of the Convention for forming the constitution of the Commonwealth, and an original member of the Massachusetts Charitable Society.

Mr. Haven left, by will, thirty dollars, for the establishment, provided the same sum should be contributed in addition, of a Parish Library, to consist of works on religious subjects, "books of warm and bitter controversy being excluded." The plan and regulations of the Library were adopted at a meeting of the Parish, Aug 27, 1804, and the Library is open to all the members of the first Parish. Additions are now annually made to it by a collection taken at the Spring Fast.

NOTE O, p. 70.

The case came on for trial, at Dedham, at the Feb. Term, 1820, and a verdict was then taken under the direction of the Judge, but questions being raised on certain points of law, the case was argued before a full court, at the October Term, 1820. The Opinion of the Court, which is long and elaborate, may be found in the 16th vol. Mass. Reports, pp. 488—522.

In this decision the Court first examined the nature of the grants out of which the funds in question have arisen, and they came to the conclusion "that the land granted was for the beneficial use of the assembly of Christians in Dedham, which were

no other than the inhabitants of that town who constituted the religious society within which the church was established," that "these inhabitants were the cestui que trusts—and the equitable title was vested in them, as long as they continued to constitute the assembly denominated the church in the grants;" the Deacons of the church being, by the law of 1754, constituted trustees for holding such property, the church having "supervisory powers in the nature of visitation that they might compel the Deacons to appropriate the proceeds of the property, according to the will of the donors." The question which next presented itself was, "whether the Plaintiffs have proved themselves to be Deacons of the *same church* to which the grants were originally made for the trusts before mentioned."

The Plaintiffs, it will be recollected, were Deacons of that part of the Old church which continued to be connected in worship and ordinances with the Parish. The question, which the court now proceed to discuss is, whether this is the true successor of the old church, entitled to the name, and all the privileges of the said ancient or first church. They decide that it is.

Most of our old churches have existed in connexion with corporate religious Societies, or Parishes; and if all the members of a church so situated, should withdraw, another church might be formed, which would succeed to all the rights and privileges of the old.

After some argument, the court proceed. "The consequences of the doctrine contended for by the defendant will glaringly show the unsoundness of the principle upon which the argument is founded. The position is, that whenever property is given to a church, it has the sole control of it, and the members for the time being may remove to any other place even without the Commonwealth, and carry the property with them.

"Now property bestowed upon churches, has always been given for some pious or benevolent purpose, and with a particular view to some associated body of Christians. The place in which the church is located is generally had in view by the donor, either because he there had enjoyed the preaching of the Gospel and the ordinances, or because it was the place where his ancestors or his family and friends had assembled together for religious purposes. These associations will be found to be the leading motive for the particular direction which his charity has received. If he gives to a church for the general purpose of promoting piety, or for the use of the poor of the church, he generally designates the body, by the place where it is accustomed to worship."

To remove the property therefore, or what amounts to the same thing, to sever the connexion between the Parish and the

church the Deacons of which are by law constituted trustees for the holding of such property, would be to contravene the will of the donors. Thus, by the very act of secession, the members seceding, forfeit all claim to the name, rights, and privileges of the old, or original, church.

Having ascertained the legal character of the original grants, and decided that the church remaining in connexion with the Parish constituted the first church, the true successor of the ancient church, it only remained to inquire whether the Plaintiffs had been duly elected its Deacons. This led into a wide field of inquiry, partly historical, and partly relating to the question of ordination.

I had marked some passages for extract, but the limits I must prescribe to myself forbid their insertion. I will give only the two concluding paragraphs.

“The authority of the church should be of that invisible, but powerful nature, which results from superior gravity, piety and devout example; it will then have its proper effect upon the congregation, who will cheerfully yield to the wishes of those who are best qualified to select the candidate; but as soon as it is challenged as a right, it will be lost. The condition of the members of a church is thought to be hard where the minister elected by the parish is not approved by them; this can only be because they are a minority, and it is one part of the compensation paid for the many blessings resulting from a state of society. A difficulty of this nature surely would not be cured by returning to the old provincial system of letting the minority rule the majority; unless we suppose that the doctrines of a minister are of no consequence to any but church members. Besides, in the present state of our laws, and as they are likely to continue there is no hardship, although there may be some inconvenience; for dissenting members of the church, as well as of the parish may join any other church and society; or they may institute a new society, so that they are neither obliged to hear nor to pay a minister in whose settlement they did not concur. It is true, if there are any parish funds, they will lose the benefit of them by removal, but an inconvenience of this sort will never be felt, when a case of conscience is in question.

“Having established the points necessary to settle the cause, viz. that the property sued for belongs to the First Church in Dedham, *sub modo*, that is, to be managed by its Deacons under the superintendence of the church, for the general good of the inhabitants of the First Parish, in the support of the public worship of God—That the members of the church now associated and worshipping with the First Parish, constitute the First Church—and that the plaintiffs are duly appointed Deacons of

that Church; it follows that the verdict of the jury is right, and that judgment must be entered accordingly."

It only remains to add a few words on the question, did the majority of the church finally withdraw, and if not, why did that portion of it, which remained with the Parish, make no effort to rebut the evidence introduced by the seceders to show that a majority did retire? The answer is not difficult. The portion of the church which remained in connexion with the Parish, or their legal advisors, did not consider it as material, in the pending controversy, on which side the majority was. They were willing to concede to the other party all the advantage accruing to them from the supposition that the majority of the church members was proved to have withdrawn. This, they were the more ready to do, as they wished to present the case in its simplest form, and unincumbered by any extraneous questions. They wished to appeal to first principles. They believed that according to these principles the right was with them, and the event proved that, so far as human tribunals are capable of deciding, they were not in error.

At the same time they maintained, and it is still maintained by us, that though the church by vote undoubtedly refused to concur with the Parish in the proceedings of the ordination, yet a majority of its members, including two or three individuals, who, though they had never had their relations formally transferred from other churches, had for many years, regularly communicated with this church, and had been recognized as members of it, by being appointed on committees, or elected as delegates to represent it at ordinations, certainly never did leave, but on the contrary, adhered to the Parish. Of this there is no question.

But throwing out of view the names of the communicants alluded to, it is further maintained, that a majority of the old members did not, in fact, retire, when, soon after the ordination, the dissatisfied members of the church and Parish, at length came to the determination to set up a separate altar over against the old; one dying before secession, and others, who opposed the proceedings of the Parish before the ordination, afterwards yielding their scruples, and living and dying in communion with the church adhering to the Parish. This, I believe, from a careful inspection of a very accurate list of the original members, to be a fact. It is certainly so, if we reject from the list the names of some, who had removed and permanently resided out of town, and one, if I mistake not, without the limits of the State, and who, it might be fairly argued, whatever might be the ecclesiastical usage in such a case, were not in strict equity, and according to our republican notions, entitled to vote, and one of whom on being solicited, refused so to do, on the ground that being a

non resident here, he had no right to interfere. Of one thing there can be no dispute, that is, that after the ordination, there was a larger vote sanctioning the proceedings of the Parish than was ever given against them. I make this whole statement after a diligent examination of authentic documents, and ample means of information, and I believe that every part of it can be fully substantiated.

As before observed, the counsel for the Parish, or that part of the church which still adhered to it,—a fact which should ever be borne in mind,—did not see fit, for reasons already stated, to go into the question, on which side the majority was, and did not introduce any evidence on the point, or attempt to refute that introduced by the other party, but allowed the seceders all the benefit they might be able to derive from the concession, that they had shown the majority to be with them. Such a concession in law, and so far as the trial was concerned, of course, was regarded as proof, and so it appears in the Report. This circumstance has, I believe, led to some misapprehension, but as understood at the time, and according to the explanation above given, it cannot be appealed to as affording sanction to the belief, that a majority of the male church members did, in reality leave the old place of worship.

I take peculiar satisfaction in observing that the excitement, which attended the controversy above referred to, has, we have reason to believe, completely subsided. None but friendly feelings now appear to exist between the members of the different religious societies in this place; the courtesies of social life are resumed, and the right of private judgment respected. Ever may it be so. A religion of peace should lull to rest every unholy passion of our nature. Its fruits should be peace.

NOTE P. p. 70.

A few miscellaneous facts, mostly of a recent date, I will throw together in this note.—In 1818 the old meeting house, in which we are now assembled, erected in 1662, retained, both within and without, its ancient form, the bell, which, however, was silent, being suspended in the porch on what now constitutes the north side, but which was then one of the ends. Soon after the induction of my predecessor into office, a company was formed for the purpose of enlarging it, and the Parish granted them liberty to execute the project, and accepted a plan which had been presented by a committee on the subject, but difficulties afterwards occurring, the design was abandoned. In 1805, the Parish determine to enlarge it at their own expense, and vote a sum of money for the object, but their votes were subsequently rescinded, and here it was understood that

the "whole matter" should be permitted to subside. In 1807, the Parish vote to erect a new meeting house, and agree on a plan for the same, and choose a building committee, and authorise them to proceed forthwith to make contracts, to borrow money, and to dispose of the old meeting house, or any part of it, or make use of the materials for constructing the new. This, and other votes on the subject were soon after rescinded, and so the matter rested till the autumn of 1819, when by vote of the Parish, the old house was enlarged by an addition in front, the direction of the roof being changed, the North and South porches being at the same time removed, and the building entirely remodelled within. A clock was added without and within, the former being the gift of the Hon. Edward Dowse and Mrs. Hannah Shaw; and the latter, of Messrs. John and Samuel Doggett, jr. of Boston, formerly of Dedham. In 1821, an Organ was purchased; and the next year Dr. Watts' Version of the Psalms was exchanged for the New York Collection of Psalms and Hymns.

In 1828, the Deacons were authorised by vote of the church to procure a vestry to be used for occasional meetings, for the Sunday school, and as a place of deposit for the Parish and Juvenile Libraries. The origin of the former has been already stated. It contains over 400 volumes. The Juvenile Library was instituted by subscription in 1827, and is supported by a collection taken after the services on the day of the annual Thanksgiving. It contains between 400 and 500 volumes.

The Council for the Ordination of the present Pastor, Oct. 29, 1818, was composed of the following Ministers with their Delegates—Rev. Dr. Reed of Bridgewater—Rev. Doctors Kirkland and Ware, of the University Church, Cambridge—Rev. Mr. Palmer of Needham—Rev. Mr. Bradford, and Rev. Dr. Gray of Roxbury—Rev. Mr. Whitney of Quincy—Rev. Doctors Lowell and Channing of Boston—Rev. Mr. Ripley of Waltham—Rev. Mr. White of Dedham—Rev. Mr. Sanger of Dover—Rev. Mr. Field of Weston—and Rev. James Walker of Charlestown. Mr. Field made the Introductory, Dr. Reed the Ordaining, and Dr. Gray, the Concluding Prayer. Dr. Ware preached. Mr. Palmer gave the charge, and Mr. White the fellowship of the churches. The Result of Council was drawn up, and read in public by Dr. Channing.

At the time of the ordination in 1818, the church had three Deacons, Dea. Joseph Swan, who died Nov. 13, 1818,—Dea. Jonathan Richards, who, in a communication addressed "to the First Church of Christ in Dedham," and bearing date the 22d of Feb. 1819, resigned his office;—and Dea. Samuel Fales, who having ceased to be connected in worship and ordinances with

the first church, was dismissed from office April 6th, 1819, without, however, any imputation on his moral and religious character.

Dea. Eliphalet Baker and Dea. Luther Richards were chosen March 15th, 1819. The latter died Dec. 5th, 1832, and the Hon. John Endicott was chosen in his place. Dea. Martin Marsh was chosen July 22d, 1838, the church having now three Deacons.

The following list of those who have previously holden the office in this church, with the year of their death, is as complete as I have the means of rendering it. Whether or not any names are wanting in the earlier part of it, I cannot say. Henry Chickering, died 1671—Nathan Aldis, 1676—John Aldis, 1700—Thomas Metcalf, 1702—William Avery, 1708—Joseph Wight, 1729—Jonathan Metcalf, 1731—John Metcalf, 1749—Joseph Wight, 1756—Jonathan Onion, 1758—Ephraim Wilson, 1769—Richard Everett, 1746—Nathaniel Kingsbury, 1775—William Avery, 1796—Ebenezer Richards, 1799—Joseph Whiting, 1806—Isaac Bullard, 1808—Aaron Fuller, 1816.

The Rev. Mr. Haven in his Sermon preached Feb. 7th, 1796, forty years after his induction into office, states that of the 529 persons who had died in the Parish during that term, 74 died between the ages of 70 and 80; 42 between the ages of 80 and 90; and 9 lived to the age of 90, or upwards; that is, about 1 in 59 reached the age of 90 or more, 1 in 10 or 11, that of 80, and 1 in between 4 and 5, the age of three score years and ten, or more—Baptisms, 904; admissions to the church, 276; marriages, 279.

Between Feb 7th, 1796, and Mr. Haven's death in 1803, the the number of persons whose deaths are recorded on the church book, is 110; of whom 11 died between the age of 70 and 80; 10 between 80 and 90; and 3 over 90; that is, 1 in 36 reached the age of 90, or over; 1 in 8 the age of 80, and nearly 1 in 5, that of 70 or more.—Baptisms, 114; admissions to the church, 36; marriages, 43.

Between 1803 and 1818, the number who died was 272; of whom 7 lived to be 90 or more; 15 died between 80 and 90; and 32 between 70 and 80; that is, about 1 in 39 reached 90, a little more than 1 in 12 lived to be 80 or more, and 1 in 5 to be 70 or more.—Baptisms, 285; admissions to the church, 105; marriages, 141.

Between 1818 and 1838, 278 have died; of whom 5 attained to the age of 90 and over; 18 died between 80 and 90; and 22 between 70 and 80; that is, about 1 in 55 have lived to be 90 or more; 1 in 12 to 80 or over, and 1 in 6 to be 70 or more.—Baptisms, 138; admissions to the church, 53; marriages, 168.







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